

ACTIVE START

Goal

Encourage child activity and develop basic motor skills.

Technical Skills:

Individual Offense

Ball Mastery

- Player and the ball
- Receiving and getting comfortable with the ball

Progression

- Player can run with the ball and keep it within playing distance

Shooting

- Players introduced to the fun of shooting

Goalkeeping

There are no goalkeepers at this age; however, all players should learn the following techniques.

Positioning

- All players are introduced to footwork that will help get in line with the ball

Shot Stopping

- All players should learn the basic technique of ball handling at different heights
- Introduce diving from the knees

Distribution

- All players should learn to throw the ball with one arm on the ground and in the air. The use of a size 3 ball or smaller is recommended

Emotional

- Provide positive support, so that children are not afraid of the ball and have confidence to catch it

Physical

Provide a fun setting and simple mode of play that develops basic movement skills in running, jumping, kicking, throwing and catching

Mental Aspects and Lifestyle

Provide a positive environment that allows players to experience success and build confidence by receiving positive recognition. Players should also enjoy a variety of sports and physical activities

FUNDAMENTALS

Goal

Coaches should emphasize Skills, Agility, Balance, Coordination and not tactics, when planning training sessions. All technique development should be done through fun activities and exercises.

Technical and Tactical Skills

Attacking Principles

Individual Offensive Skills

Ball mastery

- Player and Ball - introduce opponent
- Introduce receiving the ball exercises, progress by introducing opposition
- Emphasize controlling the ball with: inside, outside, sole of foot and thighs
- Control - Look - Play: Only challenge ball when it is in movement
- Introduce decision making

Progression with Ball

- Introduce running with the ball & 1v1 dribbling
- Introduce the importance of going to goal when moving with the ball
- Introduce change of pace

Transmission of Ball

- Short passes with both feet
- Introduce the triangle - two supportive lines of passing
- Introduce the importance of passing in game situations
- Introduce the significance of the movements from supporting players

Shooting

- Introduce players to the technique of shooting with both feet over short distances
- Introduce the ability to look up and recognize the Gk's position and make a decision where to shoot

Constructive Build-Up

Playing System

- Understand direction of play
- Teach players to recognize lines in which to pass and support the ball carrier

Mobility

- Encourage team movement by demonstrating support and appropriate spacing
- Encourage movement with the play as part of 'offensive team block'

Ball Movement

- Ask players 'how can we get to goal using ball movement?'
- Simple ball movement from line to another, encourage movement from supportive runs
- Introduce the differences of playing to feet at playing to space
 - Firm passes into feet
 - Softer passes into space
- Introduce Gk's ability to understand good ball distribution
- Introduce ball movement from Gk

Finishing

Mobility

- Players off of the ball should make supporting runs
- Introduce near and far post runs on crosses

Ball Movement

- Encourage dribbling
- If shot is not on, recognition of other options
- Teach players to shoot on goal with proper technique
- Improve accuracy of shots

Defending Principles

Individual Defensive Skills

Challenges

- Introduce simple defending skills 1v1 and Jockeying
- Introduce challenging the ball carrier to regain possession in the final third of the field
 - Middle third: Jockey and delay

Positioning

- Introduce getting goal side and proper defensive angles

Covering Space

- Introduce split vision between ball and opponent

Defending Against Build-Up

Team block

- Every player has a role

Mobility

- Prevent vertical progression by closing down the player with the ball

Goalkeeper

- Goalkeeper's should support the defense in varied positions

In & Around Penalty Area

Mobility

- Introduce individual marking close to goal
- Introduce shifting between player and the ball

Ball Carrier

- Introduce pressuring any opponent in a position to shoot by tackling, blocking, delaying the shot

Goalkeeping

Goalkeeping

Positioning

- Rotated keepers are introduced to good positioning, angle and stance, according to the position of the ball

Mobility

- Footwork used as a way for the Gk to move different directions using different types of movements

Shot Stopping

- Introduce diving technique
- Introduce ball handling with no opposition: Ground, Waist, Chest, Head, Above
- Introduce 1v1 breakaways with no contact

Preventing Goal Scoring Opportunities

- Awareness of space behind the defenders
- Introduce the concept of the 'sweeper-keeper'

Distribution

- Introduce throwing and kicking the ball from the ground and air
- Introduce under/ over arm throws
 - Throws are short and simple
- Introduce decision making
- Introduce players to basic kicking technique for goal kicks

Physical and Ancillary Capacities

Physical Aspects

General

- Develop ABC's of movement through games and warm-up activities

Stamina

- Develop endurance through fun activities

Strength

- Low priority - use of own body weight

Speed

- 1st window of development

- Males ages 7-9
- Females ages 6-8
- Encourage fast cadence of movement
- Develop linear, lateral, multi-directional movements

Suppleness

- Flexibility and mobility exercises that mimic movement required in the game
- Increase and maintain range of motion around major joints
 - Hips, Knee, Trunk, and Shoulders

Lifestyles and Mental Aspects

Sustenance & Sleep

- Educate about good nutritional habits
- Develop good sleeping habits that consist of 3+ hours of sleep prior to midnight
- Minimum of 8 hours of sleep each night

Lifestyles

- Involvement in a variety of sports should be encouraged outside of the soccer season
 - Gymnastics, swimming, Skating, Basketball, Volleyball, Lacrosse
- Promote basic self-confidence
- Allow players to achieve success and receive positive reinforcement
- Introduce ideas of teamwork and interaction skills
- Introduce concepts of fair play
- Emphasize positive attitudes

LEARNING TO TRAIN

Goal

Coaches should focus on technique and skill development and introduce tactics. Fun and positive environments are still paramount for players, so coaches should plan accordingly.

Technical and Tactical Skills

Attacking Principles

Individual Offensive Skills

Ball mastery

- Player, the ball, teammates and opponent
- Develop ball mastery in larger environments with more teammates and opponents
- Random surface use to control the ball
- Develop ability to look as the ball is travelling and make decision for next play - all of which is done under proper technique

Progression with Ball

- Introduce the understanding of staying put, then running into space
- Develop ability to run with the ball to goal and away from goal to gain space and use width
- Develop dribbling 1v1 using feints, shielding and change directions
- Develop decision making while dribbling with the ball and supporting players next actions

Transmission of Ball

- Introduce passing the ball with the head at the age of 10
 - Use lighter ball in short distances
- Develop passing the ball with both feet using various surfaces to strike the ball

Shooting

- Introduce different kinds of shots: bent, chip, volley and various surfaces
- Develop shooting skills at longer distances
- Develop ability to look up and read Gk's position
- Encourage shooting confidence

Constructive Build-Up

Playing System

- Introduce the significance of creating supportive triangles

Mobility

- Develop support play for ball carrier, players need to adjust their positioning on their line to make themselves available for the ball carrier
- Develop understanding of the offensive team block and initiate inter-changing of positions

- Encourage supporting runs into space

Ball Movement

- Simple combination plays
- Vary rhythm of ball movement
- Understand when is the best time to play to feet or space
- Develop Gk's understanding of good ball distribution, by recognizing available choices and having the necessary skill to perform task

From Goalkeeper's

- Develop constructive build up from the Gk

In Offensive half

- Introduce constructive build up in the offensive half

In Defensive half

- Introduce constructive build up in the defensive half

Imbalance

Wing Players

Mobility of players without the Ball

- Introduce wing play toward the end of the stage by using wide players running along the wing or inside towards the goal

Mobility of players with the Ball

- Encourage the winger to take the ball down the flank with running and dribbling actions

Ball Movement

- Introduce crosses on the ground
- Introduce 'Set Plays'
- Introduce change of rhythm

Central Players

Mobility

- Creating space for self
- Link up plays between strikers
- Support movements in-front and behind defenders

Ball Movement

- Introduce alternating direct and indirect play
- Introduce limiting the number of passes
- Develop penetrating passes into space
- Develop penetrating passes into feet
- Link up play between lines
- Introduce 'Set plays'
- Introduce Change of rhythm

Finishing

Mobility

- Introduce near and far post runs
- Players off of the ball should make supporting runs

Ball Movement

- Introduce the last-pass
- Introduce shooting from further distances
- Introduce 'Set Plays'
- Develop technique of shooting on goal with proper technique and decision making - wherever the Gk isn't

Defending Principles

Individual Defensive Skills

Challenges

- Develop defending skills: 1v1 and jockeying
- Develop challenging the ball carrier from different angles to regain possession

Positioning

- Develop getting goal-side and proper angles
- Initiate recovery runs throughout the stage

Covering Space

- Introduce decision making process for when and how to intercept the ball
- Develop understanding of 'split' vision between ball and opponent

Defending Against Build-Up

Team block

- Introduce the tactics of the player defending against the ball carrier and having support

Mobility

- Prevent progression by closing the player with the ball, as a team

Goalkeeper

- Gk supports the defense in varied position and may be required to intercept plays

In & Around Penalty Area

Mobility

- Introduce zonal coverage
- Develop individual marking close to goal
- Shifting vision between player and ball

Ball Carrier

- Introduce defending against wingers
- Develop pressure on the ball carrier and get compact to prevent deep passes
- Develop pressuring any opponent in a position to shoot by: tackling, blocking, reducing options by delaying

Set Plays

- Introduce defending against 'Set Plays'

Goalkeeping

Positioning

Body Stance

- Develop good stance according to the ball

Mobility

- Develop footwork
- Introduce SAQ program to enhance agility and coordination to improve Gk's mobility

Shot Stopping

Body Action

- Introduce side diving and later in the stage varied types of diving: forward, aerial, power, high dives
- Develop jump, roll and fall

Ball Trajectory

- Introduce deflecting the ball
- Introduce two-fist punching from a thrown ball
- Develop handling balls from different trajectories and distances

Technical Action

- Develop tackling and diving at feet
- Develop how to approach a breakaway 1v1

Preventing Goal Scoring Opportunities

- Introduce reading space behind defenders
- Introduce catching and deflecting crosses and duel situations from thrown services
- Develop role of sweeper-keeper

Distribution

- Introduce: Overarm, Sidearm, Javelin throws
- Introduce half-volley drop kick
- Introduce moving pass?
- Develop rolling throws
- Develop drop kick

Goal-kicks

- Develop the technique for Goal-kicks
- Introduce different tactical options for Goal-kick

Mental

- Construct environments to build confidence
- Encourage determination and courageous efforts
- Training is progressive to diminish opportunities to develop fear of the ball

Coaches Management

General

- All players should take turn in goal. Despite some showing a preference to the position, coaches should resist the temptation to limit Goalkeeping to just a few players

Observation

- Goalkeeper should be able to see the ball and opponent who is in a position to create danger

Communication

- Communicate while the play is developing to help organize defense
- Communicate while attacking team is setting up set play's

Set Pieces

- Introduce the role of the goalkeeper on corners and free kicks
- Understand different tasks associated with communication

Decision Making

- Goalkeeper is introduced to building up the play and counter attacks
- Encourage proper technique, based on the Goalkeeper's decision

Physical Capacities

Agility, Balance and Coordination

- High importance:
Develop through games and warm-up activities

Stamina

- Continue to develop stamina through soccer activities

Strength

- Low priority:
Develop using own body weight

Speed

- Female's second window of trainability: ages 11-13
- Develop linear, lateral, and multi-directional speed
- Progressively increase maximum speed and power exercises
- Integrate speed and quickness into warm-ups
- Increase emphasis on technique

Skill

- Window of optimal trainability prior to onset of growth spurt
 - Boys: ages 9-12
 - Girls: ages 8-11

Suppleness

- Increase flexibility around major joints with whole body performing specific movements
 - Shoulders, Elbows, Wrists, Trunk/ Spine, Hips, Knees, Ankles

Sustenance

- Educate children and parents on good nutritional habits

Sleep

- Encourage 3+ hours of sleep prior to midnight
- Overall minimum of 8 hours of sleep each night

Body Structure

- Monitor growth every 3 months; make training adjustments based on rate of growth

Other Sports

- Encourage involvement with two or more sports throughout the year

Long Term Psychological Development

LTPD recognizes that mental training must form an integral part of player development, as players must have confidence in themselves, be motivated for long hours of training and also have the ability to maintain concentration during every minute of concentration.

Sport Psychologists identify 4 principle mental qualities for player success

1. Confidence
2. Concentration
3. Motivation
4. Handling Pressure

Mental

General

- Introduce relaxation exercises
- Introduce concentration exercises
- Achieve success and receive positive reinforcement

Training & Competition

- Introduce goal setting sheets
- Set process and outcome goals
- Introduce imagery: the ability to imagine self, playing soccer
- Basic ability to focus on coaches instruction
- Introduce basic activation and relaxation exercises
- Introduce the understanding of mental training aspects - I.P.S

Emotional

General Characteristics

- Challenge players with problem solving situations
- Teach more advanced techniques founded upon the basics they already process
- Continue to use positive reinforcement with players

Emotional

- Anxiety and fear inhibit learning and the desire to perform; Coaches and Parents should be understanding
- Involve players in roles such as officiating and leading certain activities (i.e. warm-ups or cool-downs)

Psychosocial

- Provide opportunity for players to input team decisions, policies and rules
- Help players understand certain attributes: Hustle, Determination and Understanding will help overcome physical shortcomings
- Stress the importance of teamwork and specific roles of each player on the field
- Be careful not to overemphasize producing results and winning
- Continue to provide guidance to youth - don't expect adult level behaviour and performance
- Be positive, patient and always maintain/ expect reasonable expectations
- Introduce strategy and tactics

Ancillary Capacities

Lifestyles

Sports and Activity Lifestyle

- Involved with multi-sports
- Introduce hydration and nutrition
- Introduce cultural habits and lifestyle habits
- Educate parents about lifestyle considerations for players

Personal Life Skills

- Introduce the importance of discipline and structure
- Develop understanding of 'effort & outcome' processes
- Develop teamwork and interaction skills

Glossary

Defensive Pressing

All players on the defending team move quickly to their opponents in an effort to force an error to win back possession. This tactic may take place in various parts of the field

Dropping of Defensively

All player's on the defending team retreat to a predetermined zone of the field to absorb attacking pressure. Player on defending team will wait for the opponent to attempt penetrating movements, where they will try to dispossess the attackers of the ball

Man Marking

The practice of assigning one defender to move with and defend against on opponent regardless of field position

Zonal Marking

The assignment of a defender to defend a certain area of the field

Physical Literacy

The mastering of fundamental motor skills and fundamental sport skills

Principles of Play

Basic playing concepts that form the building blocks for individual and collective tactical play

Attacking

Penetrate, width, mobility, support, surprise and depth

Defending

Delay, pressure, cover, support, concentration, balance, constraint, compactness

Style

Direct

Reflects a team's determination to force the ball quickly up-field by performing passes that are often long and in the air. Intentions are to place the defending side under immediate pressure and force them to defend in their own half of the field.

Possession

The main objective is to retain the ball with the intention of moving towards the opponents goal through steady and gradual build-ups. Player's concentrate on maintaining the ball through frequent passing amongst teammates that finds space to receive the ball, which is generally under low pressure.