

## U9 Curriculum Details

This curriculum has been designed in order to enhance the developmental process of all players within an age appropriate environment, allowing the player(s) to develop at their own optimal rate within a team. As each player moves through their developmental process they should have acquired the competencies from each age group regarding the 4 pillars of the game, Technical, Tactical, Physical and Psycho Social. During the stages the coach should work through phases that are related to age appropriate themes, allowing the players to develop and grow both on and off the field.

Having a coaching philosophy will not only allow you to create and establish an appropriate environment, but it will also help you reflect upon the manner in which you convey it to your players. Before you start each season you need to consider a number of objectives and qualities that you feel will help you achieve your goals. When creating and following your philosophy, some items to consider are: Who am I coaching?

- Core values- Ethical and consistent
- Develop the player and the person
- Set age appropriate and realistic goals
- Winning vs losing
- Developing the individual and the team

### **The Four Components:**

#### **Technical:**

\_All players need to be capable of executing technical competencies required through each stage of their developmental process. It is also important that the players gain the technical proficiencies required of a number of positions. The technical aspects of the game should be taught in order for the player to execute the 'skills' required within the game.

#### **Tactical:**

\_The tactical component is the decision making element to the game. The objective should be to help players understand their roles individually, within small groups and within the team. Players must be given the opportunity to solve problems on both sides of the ball. This can be taught through the use of small-sided games that are both age appropriate and incorporate transition.

#### **Physical:**

\_Strength, speed, agility, balance, mobility, stamina and endurance are all extremely important facets of the game. Players need to progress through their developmental stages gaining these aspects both with and without the ball

#### **Psychological:**

\_The psychological development of the players can be addressed regarding a number of elements. The ability to process tactical decision making, co-operation with team-mates (psychosocial), emotional concepts of the player.

**The stages/activities should progress with the following aims/objectives:**

**Stage 1:** Warm-up- Technical repetition, progress from unopposed to opposed

**Stage 2:** Integrate individual and small group tactics

**Stage 3:** Expand numbers and ensure directional play within this stage

**Stage 4:** Final game- allow the players to apply the concepts from the topic into a regular game

**Coaching Moments:**

- **Freeze:** Opportunities to 'paint a picture'
- **Individual Reference:** Coaching an individual during the session without interfering with the flow of the activity
- **In the flow:** Coaching from the sidelines without stopping the activity
- **Natural stoppage:** Using natural stoppages such as free kicks, ball going out of bounds, injuries, free kicks in order to make coaching points

**Small Sided Games Rationale:**

Small sided games should be a key element within the coach's methodology as this environment not only allows the coach to connect the 4 components of the game within their sessions but also allows the players to:

- stay engaged
- influence their technical skills- more touches on the ball
- influence their tactical skills- more decision making
- influence their fitness/physical levels- more active regarding physiological demands
- influence their mental skills- more active with psychosocial skills

**Things to consider when adding variables/conditions to your sessions:**

- Players- number of players- even, numbers up/down, neutral players inside and outside the grid, opponents
- Methods of scoring- making the session competitive, awarding points for objectives achieved relative to the topic, scoring in goals, touch restrictions, winning possession back
- Space- size of grid must be age appropriate, can be square or rectangular, rectangular replicates the shape of a soccer field, shape and size will influence the 4 components of the game within the session
- Time- length of time for each activity
- Conditions- too many conditions will make the objectives harder to reach, conditions

should never become more important than playing realistic soccer, too many conditions can impact the flow of the session

### **Positions:**

When placing players into different positions it is important that the coach teaches the various roles and responsibilities required of them. By moving the players into various positions and into different areas of the field you may feel that you are helping their development, but it is important that this is done with planning and careful consideration as to how players learn, especially young players.

Moving young players into many different positions in one game will only confuse them, which places them into situations of cognitive overload. It is best to play young players in the same position for at least 2 or 3 games and then move them along the line to another position or up a line. Moving a right back to central defense or up a line into midfield will help them to understand the roles and responsibilities that are required of each position.

Below are a number of different formations that you can play in 8v8 formations. As you can see for example in 8v8 the role of the defenders in a 1.2.3.2 is very different than in a 1.3.3.1. The 1.2.3.2 allows the players to make triangles with 2 forwards up top.

#### **1-2-3-2**

**Pros**

**Cons**

#### **1-3-3-1**

**Pros**

**Cons**