

# **Soccer Nova Scotia**

## **Best Practices Resource Manual**



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**Providing a resource for Districts and Clubs to follow whilst ensuring that all youth soccer in Nova Scotia is consistently following the Canadian Soccer Association Long Term Player Development model guiding coaching and player development.**

## **Acknowledgements**

Soccer Nova Scotia would like to acknowledge the other readily available documents we referenced in creating this document.

**Ontario Soccer Association - LTPD Documents**

**The FA - Child Friendly Football Documents**

**Canadian Sport for Life - LTAD Documents**



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# Technical Summary

As coaching staff, volunteers, assistants, head coaches and paid staff, we will always try to provide a place for players of all abilities to play. Being a part of a club is just that...being a part. Whether Tier 1, Competitive, and/or Active Start under 4 program, players all have a place within the program.

It is our mandate to provide the best possible opportunity for the players. As organizers of soccer in this province, it is our job to assess players fairly within a fun, social, competitive and developmental soccer environment in order to place them within the proper progression. We must continue to re-assess players as they grow and develop. Tomorrow is a new day and players who want to get better will never be stifled. Our main goal is to provide an option for kids to participate and develop at all levels, regardless of their skill.

The question we have to ask ourselves is what should the ideal soccer program look like in our province.

When devising this Best Practices for Nova Scotia Clubs manual we used the CSA's Club Development Model as a framework. The aim is for clubs to look at this document and strive to meet the standards set by the LTPD model. We wanted to make it as simple as possible for clubs to follow and implement. The goal is to have everyone in Canada and everyone in Nova Scotia on the same page, i.e, an under 8 recreational program in Tatamagouche should operate the same as one in Dartmouth. There is some terminology that may be new and require extra videos, handouts, sample sessions, and/or time with staff coaches of appropriate age groups.

Looking at this model will also provide an opportunity for our member clubs and districts to evaluate what they are currently offering to their members on an annual basis, adapt the programs to suit the development of the game, (or modify areas where things could be done better) and continue building aspects of clubs for improved future development of programs, players and coaches.



# Preferred Training Model

## CANADA SOCCER PATHWAY: OUR PREFERRED TRAINING MODEL



Canada Soccer recommends a “station” approach to training. Players move from one skill-building activity to the next at regular intervals. The time spent on each activity varies based on the age of the player (see “Training Templates”).

This method is not only more fun for young players who tend to have short attention spans but also allows training sessions to be tailored to a team’s individual needs, depending on the number of players, the number of parents and coaches present, and the available facilities.

Each training session is built around four activity stations, one focusing on **General Movement** skills, one on **Co-ordination**, one on **Soccer Technique** and another on **Small-Sided Games**. Addressing all four of these training “pillars” at each practice session will help develop well- rounded young players with a foundation in physical literacy, solid soccer skills and, ideally, an enduring love of the game.

## TRAINING TEMPLATE

**FOR PLAYERS AT THE ACTIVE START STAGE, TRAINING SESSIONS SHOULD BE 45-60 MINUTES LONG AND COMPRISED OF:**

25%	25%	25%	25%
GENERAL MOVEMENT	COORDINATION	SOCCER TECHNIQUE	SMALL-SIDED GAMES

**FOR PLAYERS AT THE FUNDAMENTALS STAGE (U-6/U-8 GIRLS; U-6/U-10 BOYS), TRAINING SESSIONS SHOULD BE 60-75 MINUTES LONG AND COMPRISED OF:**

20%	20%	20%	40%
GENERAL MOVEMENT	COORDINATION	SOCCER TECHNIQUE	SMALL-SIDED GAMES

**FOR PLAYERS AT THE LEARNING TO TRAIN STAGE (U-8/U-11 GIRLS; U-9/U-12 BOYS), TRAINING SESSIONS SHOULD BE 75-90 MINUTES LONG AND COMPRISED OF:**

10%	10%	40%	40%
GENERAL MOVEMENT	COORDINATION	SOCCER TECHNIQUE	SMALL-SIDED GAMES

**This toolkit will give you ideas for specific activities under each of the four training pillars. How you set up your training sessions is entirely up to you. For example:**

One coach or parent working with a single group of players on a half field can simply switch up the “pillar” activities throughout the session.

If you have a full field, two or more coaches/ parent volunteers and 12 or more players, you may choose to divide the players into two or more groups and have them rotate through stations being run simultaneously.

# Preferred Training Model Field

## CANADA SOCCER PATHWAY: OUR PREFERRED TRAINING MODEL



Example of the Canadian Soccer Association 'Preferred Learning Model' for all ages on a full-size field. The additional stations (highlighted) can be added for the additional time based on the recommended session time for the age and stage.

# The Four Corner Development Model

*The Four Corner Model outlines the factors that need to be considered as a young player grows and develops in the game. Each of the corners is connected and relies on support from the other three areas. The model is appropriate to players aged 5 to 21.*

## Player Focused

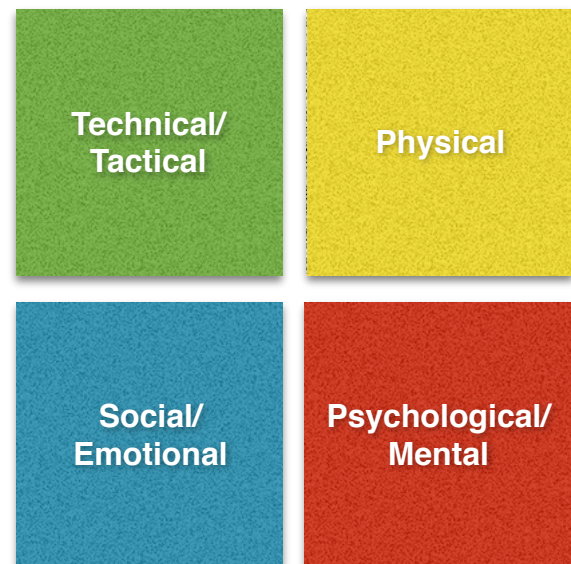
The Four Corner LTPD model consists of technical, psychological, physical and social/emotional components. Each corner of the model reflects a wide aspect of a player's development that has to be considered. The gradual progressive development of players is fundamental to the enjoyment, technical competency and retention in the game. The Four Corner approach places the player at the centre of the development process with soccer experiences that meet the four key needs of the player.

## Framework

Although priorities will vary during the player's different ages and phases of maturity, the model provides a basic framework for coaches to work within. In addition to the four main components, there are a number of 'contributions' from a wide variety of people, such as parents, teachers, schools and local clubs. The model is deliberately interlinked, which means that activity in any one corner will produce a reaction throughout all aspects of the model. For example, a practice technique may impact physical balance and co-ordination while producing increased confidence and enhanced social standing within the group. The key message to coaches is not to consider any of the program's aspects in isolation.

## Performance

A player's performance in practice and matches can be influenced by the following factors, nearly all of which need to be considered when forming an opinion of a player's progress and true ability: date of birth, relative to the rest of the group; body types; adolescent growth spurt in all the four corners; physical maturity; psychological maturity; social maturity; previous experience; opposition; position suitability; instructions given to the player; and recent playing activity.






**The Four Corner Development Model**



# Technical/Tactical:

**Players improve by playing lots of soccer and being active in other complementary sports and activities. That said, without a skilled mix of guidance, challenges, appropriate questioning, demonstration and teaching, it's unlikely that players will reach their true potential.**

## **Tips for Technical Development:**







-  Use the coaching activity to challenge and develop players technically. Encourage players to try new skills.
-  Appropriate challenges may be set for the whole group or for individuals within the group. For example in a passing practice some players may be challenged to play one-touch passes when appropriate
-  When appropriate, practice activity should replicate the demands of the game, encouraging players to think and make decisions as they would in a game. Clever practice design should allow players to repeat and re-visit elements of the game without experiencing boredom.

# Physical:

**To become an effective soccer player there are basic physical movement skills that need to be developed. Agility, balance, coordination, and speed (ABC'S) are all essential qualities for players; between the ages of 4-12 young players have a “window of opportunity” to develop these attributes.**

**Addressing the state of physical literacy of children is one of the biggest challenges we currently face in society and coaches should help communicate the benefits of physical activity and a healthy lifestyle.**






## **Tips for Physical Development:**

-  Children are not mini adults and shouldn't be subjected to running laps on the field and doing push ups.
-  Through well-designed practice all coaching activities can include physical outcomes.
-  A shooting practice may include a physical challenge which is realistic to the demands of the game. EG. a defender and an attacker may have to turn and race onto a through ball before taking a shot at goal. In this way the players are working on turning, acceleration and deceleration, as well as the technical elements of the exercise.
-  Coaches working with young players should be aware of the key windows for physical development and which aspects of a players development can be improved and when.
-  Appropriate movement skills such as tag games and activities which develop agility, balance and coordination, should be encouraged through enjoyable games.
-  Don't expect too much from young players too soon!

# Psychological/Mental:

**Creating learning environments that challenge players to be imaginative, creative and reflect on their performance— both during and after practice/game—is fundamental to the development of the future player. Coaches should adopt different styles and methods to meet the individual needs of young players, understanding that there is more than one way for players to learn the game.**




## **Tips for Psychological Development:**

-  Use different methods to communicate with different types of learners.
-  Visual: tactics boards, posters, diagrams, cue and prompt cards as well as arrangements of cones on the pitch are some ways in which coaches can communicate with players visually.
-  Auditory: As well as speaking with the players and asking questions, coaches can encourage players to discuss aspects of the game in pairs, small groups and also with the whole group. Through communication with others, players can help solve game-related problems and learn more about the game.
-  Kinaesthetic: physically ‘walking through’ positional arrangements and freeze-framing parts of the game can help paint pictures in the mind of the players and contribute to the understanding of the game.
-  Help players learn the game and develop their decision-making skills by setting game-related problems for players to solve. For example “in this passing practice try and turn with no-touches whenever possible; try and work out when you will be able to do this and when you won’t”.

# Social/Emotional:

**Playing soccer can help children learn many life skills; cooperation, teamwork, communication and friendship are some of the benefits of joining a team and playing the game. To allow these social skills to develop, players should be allowed a safe and supportive environment and given encouragement to learn the game.**

## **Tips For Social Development:**

-  Coaches should strive to create a positive environment which is welcoming for players both during games and training. How you treat your players is crucial to ensuring a positive and fulfilling experience for the young player.
-  Players should be praised and recognized for their effort, endeavour and ability. This will highlight the process of learning and striving to get better, rather than just the final outcome.
-  As coaches are in a significant position of influence with their players, it is important to give consideration to the type of role-model you are. What are your values and beliefs and how is this demonstrated in your behaviour?



# Player Characteristics of Age Appropriate Development

Stage	Age	Characteristics
Active Start	U4	Players at this age have a very short attention span, they are very easily distracted. They all want to play with their ball, the toy. Unable to see the world from another's perspective, everything is in the here and now.
	U5	There is no ability yet for team play. As sharing is still an alien concept and makes them uncomfortable. Effort is synonymous with performance, if they tried hard they believe they have done well.
FUNdamentals	U6	Able to understand very basic coaching info like stay in the area, attack in that direction etc. Learning through trial and error. Unable to think abstractly, asking them to think about spatial relations or runs off the ball is unrealistic.
	U7	Players now understand that the game's purpose is to score more goals than their opponents. Still a lot of individual play, but are more comfortable with playing in pairs for games.
	U8	Players understanding that acting with the ball purposefully will lead to success. They now understand "if I do this, then that happens".
Learning to Train	U9	Now playing on a 7v7 field the understanding of team play, direction and opponent is developing. Optimum age to work on soccer specific techniques and skills. They are more inclined towards wanting to play soccer rather than being told to play.
	U10	More and more understanding and feeling for teamwork. Understanding of playing without the ball (movement off the ball) develops.
	U11	Perfect mental and physical ability for developing motor skills. Preference for specific positions becomes clearer. Developing an understanding of individual roles in relation to the team.
	U12	Likes to compete and compare. Socially aware, critical of own performance and that of others. Ideal mental and physical condition in this age/stage group.

FOR MORE DETAILED PLAYER CHARACTERISTICS SEE EACH DEVELOPMENT STAGE



# Active Start - U4 & U5



## ACTIVE START PRACTICE PRIORITIES

### Philosophy - “First Steps, first kicks”

**At this introductory level the objective is to get children moving and to keep them active. No competitive games should be played – the objective is for adults and children to play together informally. The children being active, together, with a well-known family member will give them a sense of security and safety and as such enhance their first group soccer experience.**

The physical curriculum provides for learning basic fundamental movement skills such as running- jumping- twisting- throwing- catching.

The technical requirements are not about teaching the techniques of soccer. They are to encourage children to enjoy becoming friends with the ball. They can experience the following through fun and imaginative games: running with the ball, stopping and changing direction with the ball, dribbling, kicking and shooting.

At this stage, players should participate in a variety of additional activities. Swimming and well-structured gymnastics programs are recommended to enhance the full range of basic movement skills and physical literacy.

### Format

**No team games are played at this development stage. Players are involved in interactive competitions with parents, grandparents, older siblings etc. Practice should be 30 to 45 minutes in length.**

Small-sided games can be 1v1, e.g. Mom or Dad vs. Child. During practice each player should have a ball, lots of touches, left and right foot. Just let them play with lots of movement. Encourage the use of both feet, different parts of foot and body.














# Active Start - Player Characteristics

**Below is a list of typical expectations and characteristics you can expect from Active Start players.**








-  Focused on themselves—reality to them is solely based on what they see and feel
-  Unable to see the world from another's perspective—it is “the world according to me” time.
-  Asking them to understand how someone else is seeing something or feels is unrealistic.
-  Everything is in the here and now—forget about the past and future, they live in the moment.
-  Heating and cooling systems are less efficient than adults—we need to give frequent water breaks (every 8-10 minutes) or they may just run until they cannot run anymore.
-  Enjoying playing, not watching—they feel no enjoyment from watching others play when they could be playing too. Make sure every player has a ball in practice so every player is always playing
-  Limited attention span(on average 15 seconds for listening, 10-15 minutes when engaged in a task) keep your directions concise and to the point. When in an open environment such as a park, their attention span will dwindle towards 10 seconds.
-  Effort is synonymous with performance— if they have tried hard, they believe they have done well. This is a wonderful quality and we should be supportive of their enthusiasm.
-  Active imaginations— if we utilize their imaginations in practice activities, they will love practice!
-  Look for adult approval – watch how often players look to you for approval or to see if you are looking. Also be encouraging when they say “Coach, look what I can do!”
-  Unable to think abstractly – asking them to think about spatial relations or runs off the ball is unrealistic.
-  Typically have 2 speeds -- extremely fast and stopped.
-  Usually unaware of game scores – we should keep it that way.
-  Often like to fall down just because it is fun – they are just children having fun.
-  Often cannot identify left foot vs. right foot.

# Active Start - Recommendations









## Practice Recommendations - Active Start - U4

-  It must be FUN!
-  Every child has a ball.
-  “One with one” at 4 years – let parent/grandparent/older sibling assist with the session. Little person/big person learn the game together.
-  Emphasis on fundamental movement skills, running, hopping, jumping, skipping, tumbling – “Developing Physical Literacy”.
-  Basic ball familiarization games, rolling, bouncing, kicking, catching.
-  Be creative, tell them a story and relate the story to a soccer activity.
-  Shark Attack, Pirate Pete, Dora the Explorer, Race Car etc. Play games with themes.
-  Do not worry about teaching the techniques. Learn by doing
-  Very basic 1v1 games (little vs big) with parents/older siblings involved.
-  Players will respond to a high-energy environment.
-  Change the session activity or game often.
-  These players love praise and enthusiasm.
-  Not really soccer – but activity with a soccer ball.

## Practice Recommendations - Active Start - U5

-  Same as U4, plus...
-  Parents present – but not on the field with players, unless the player needs it.
-  Physical Literacy – more emphasis on the technique, of jumping/running/hopping – add competitions.
-  Players still learn by playing games using imagination – relate the games more to the techniques of soccer.
-  Change the session activity or game often.
-  Introducing the game at 1 v 1 and 2 v 2.
-  No Goalkeepers yet.

## Coaching Methodology for U4 & U5

-  Keep information brief and positive.
-  Show them what you want; Demonstrate the activities and games.
-  Parents can assist with reinforcing your coaching information.
-  Keep the environment positive and happy.
-  Lots of praise and celebrations – High Fives!
-  Encourage and celebrate success.
-  Be flexible, allow the players to deviate and be creative.
-  Keep it safe.



# Active Start - Practice Recommendations Matrix

DEVELOPMENT STAGE	ACTIVE START	
PHYSICAL	U4	U5
Running Forward	1	1
Running Backward	1	1
Jumping	1	1
Skipping	1	1
Hopping	1	1
Bounding	2	2
Crawling	2	2
Turning	2	2
Falling/diving	3	2
Twisting	2	2
Rolling	3	3
Other sports	1	1

DEVELOPMENT STAGE	ACTIVE START	
TECHNICAL	U4	U5
Dribbling	1	1
Shooting	1	1
Running with the ball	1	1
Ball control	3	2
Passing	3	3
Receiving	3	2
Heading	4	4
Shielding the ball	4	4
Crossing	4	4
Finishing	4	4
1v1 Defending	4	4
1v1 Attacking	4	4

DEVELOPMENT STAGE	ACTIVE START	
SOCIAL/EMOTIONAL	U4	U5
Listening	2	2
Cooperation	3	3
Communication	1	1
Sharing	3	3
Problem-solving	3	3
Decision-making	3	2
Empathy	3	2
Patience	3	2
Respect/Discipline	2	2
Fair play/Honesty	3	2

DEVELOPMENT STAGE	ACTIVE START	
PSYCHOLOGICAL/MENTAL	U4	U5
Motivation	1	1
Self Confidence	1	1
Competitiveness	4	4
Concentration	4	4
Commitment	4	4
Self-Control	3	3
Determination	3	3

PRIORITY KEY	1 = HIGH	2 = MID	3 = LOW	4 = NOT APPLICABLE
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Age	Format	Per Week	Duration	Ball Size	Field Size	Goal Size	Rules	# Sessions
U4	1 on 1 with parent	1	45-60 mins	3	N/A	N/A	No rules just FUN	10-16 summer 8-12 winter
U5	1 on 1 with parent	1	45-60 mins	3	N/A	N/A	No rules just FUN	10-16 summer 8-12 winter

# Active Start - Practice Activities

## FRIENDS WITH THE BALL

### TIME FRAME

6 - 8 minutes

### EMPHASIS

- Listening
- Running with the ball
- Dribbling
- Changing direction
- FUN!

### 4 CORNER CONTENT

#### Technical

Dribbling, shooting

#### Tactical

Not applicable

#### Physical

Agility, balance, coordination, change of direction

#### Social

Listening, communication, celebrating

#### Psychological

Building Confidence, Feel Safe

### DIAGRAM



### INSTRUCTION

All players have a ball each and dribble the ball around inside an area. Players perform different moves on coaches call.

## INDY 500

### TIME FRAME

6 - 8 minutes

### EMPHASIS

- Listening
- Running with the ball
- Dribbling
- Changing direction
- FUN!

### 4 CORNER CONTENT

#### Technical

Dribbling, shooting

#### Tactical

Not applicable

#### Physical

Agility, balance, coordination, change of direction

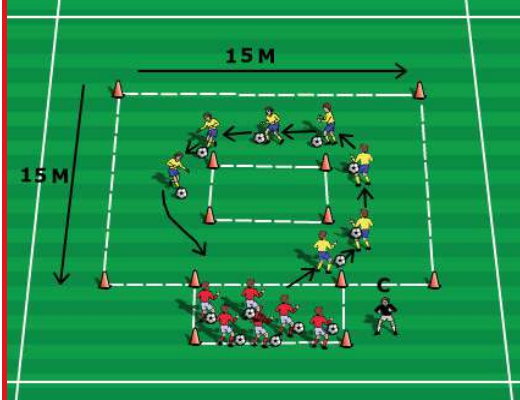
#### Social

Listening, communication, celebrating

#### Psychological

Building Confidence, Feel Safe

### DIAGRAM



### INSTRUCTION

Players "drive" their ball around the course. Coach can ask for a change of direction, speed, stopping, etc.

# Active Start - Coaching Measures

When young players are moving from the Active Start development stage and are ready to progress to the Fundamentals stage, the coach should have exposed them to, and taught them in, the following Technical, Physical, Social and Psychological skills.

TECHNICAL		
Dribbling the ball	Right foot and Left foot	Let the players experience and experiment with a variety of surfaces
Shooting the ball	Right foot and Left Foot	Let the players experience and experiment with a variety of surfaces
Running with the ball	Right foot and Left Foot	Let the players experience and experiment with a variety of surfaces
Turning with the ball	Right foot or Left foot	Players are exposed to turning and changing direction with the ball
Receiving the ball	Right foot and Left Foot	Being able to stop a rolling ball on the ground

PHYSICAL		
Running Forward	Straight and with a change of direction	Players can run in a forward direction and make a change of direction, right and left while in control
Running Backward	Straight	Players can run backwards and stay in control of body
Jumping	Jump off the ground and safe landing	Both feet are off the ground and the player is able to land safely
Skipping	Right and Left foot	Expose the players to lead with right and left foot take off, in control of body
Hopping	Right and Left foot	Expose the players to lead with right and left foot take off, in control of body
Bounding	Right and Left	Introduction only
Crawling	Staying close to the ground	Move across the ground using both hands and feet to propel themselves
Turning	To the Right or left	Players are able to turn in directions, right and left.
Twisting	Moving upper body	Lower body is static and stable whilst upper body is moving.

SOCIAL/EMOTIONAL		
Listening	Listen Quietly	Players are able to listen to brief Information from coach and parents (Coach be brief)
Respect/Discipline	Others	Players are learning to respect other players' equipment and space. Can stay in playing area.
Communication	Verbal Communication	Players are able to verbally communicate with parents and the coach and have started to speak with other players

PSYCHOLOGICAL/MENTAL		
Motivation	Fun, rewarding activities	Players are anxious to participate and eager for the next activity and practice through enjoyment and success
Self Confidence	Safe and positive environment	Players are starting to feel confident in a crowd of unknown players and parents



# FUNdamental - U6, U7 & U8



## FUNdamental PRACTICE PRIORITIES TECHNICAL/PHYSICAL

### Philosophy - "Fun with the Ball"

**Skill development at this stage should be well structured, positive and FUN and should concentrate on developing the ABC's of Agility, Balance and Coordination plus Speed. Coaches should create a stimulating learning environment where the atmosphere is about freedom and fun.**

Encourage your players to take part in unstructured play every day with their friends.

Learning to understand the movements going on around them is a critical skill to be developed at this age. Playing small-sided games, 3v3, 4v4 etc. can develop a player's ability to read what others are going to do (the play) based on their movements.

Let your players make decisions, expose them to working out problems.

The philosophy underlying the Festival format is to focus on FUNdamentals and to emphasize skill development and movement through games and activities. These activities must promote a feel for the ball while teaching basic principles of play within a fun but structured setting.

### Format

**Under 6 players will play in a 3v3 environment with no goalkeepers.**

There will be no league standings or scores recorded. Players will play in their Club environment playing against teams from within their own Club or Academy. No inter-Club play is to take place. Referees are not required. Coaches act as game supervisors. Boys and girls can play on the same teams. Players will play a fair amount of time in each position by rotating through each spot on the field.

# FUNdamental - U6, U7 & U8

**Under 7 players are to play in a 4v4 format with no goalkeepers or a 5v5 environment with goalkeepers.**







There are no league standings or scores recorded. Players are to play in their Club environment playing against teams from within their own Club. No inter- Club play is to take place. Referees are recommended. Boys and girls can play on the same teams. Players will play a fair amount of time in each position by rotating around each position, including goalkeeper when used. Games area total of 40 minutes.

**Under 8 players will play in a 5v5 environment. At this age goalkeepers can be introduced although players should play in all positions including goalkeeper.**

Again no scores or standings are maintained. Players can participate in their Club/Academy environment or participate in District Festivals on a weekend. District Festivals involve Club teams from within the district. No inter-District play is allowed. At this age referees are introduced. No more than 2 games can be played on a festival day, Saturday or Sunday.

Boys and girls can play on the same teams. Players will play a fair amount of time in each position.
















## Recommended mini soccer 5v5 rules

-  All free kicks are indirect.
-  After the scoring of a goal, the game is restarted at the centre.
-  When the Goalkeeper has the ball in his/her hands, or at a goal kick, the opposition players are to retreat to approximately the 1/2 way line until the ball is touched by another player other than the goalkeeper.
-  To encourage play from the back, the goalkeeper can either throw the ball or kick the ball from the ground. No drop kicks.
-  Players, including goalkeepers, can be substituted at any stoppage in the game.
-  When the ball leaves the field of play along the sideline, the game is restarted by passing the ball into play. A goal cannot be scored directly from the ball being passed in.

Age	Format	Games Per Week	Practice Per Week*	Duration	Ball Size	Field Size	Goal Size	Rules	# Sessions
U6	3 vs 3	1/ Festival	1	60-75mins (Practice) 15-30mins (Game)	3	20x25m	Pugg or 5'x8'	Coach Supervise	15-20 Summer 10-20 Winter
U7	4v4	1/ Festival	2	60-75mins (Practice) 30-40mins (Game)	3/4	30x35m	Pugg or 5'x8'	Recommended Mini Rules	15-20 Summer 10-20 Winter
U8	5v5 inc. GK's	1/ Festival	1 - Rec 2/3 - Dev	60-75mins (Practice) 30-40mins (Game)	3/4	30x35m	5'x8'	Recommended Mini Rules	15-20 Summer 10-20 Winter







# FUNdamental - Player Characteristics

**Below is a list of typical expectations and characteristics you can expect from FUNdamental players.**








-  Tend to play well in pairs– try to set up the pairs yourself to control the games and manage the personalities.
-  Are now able to take another’s perspective – they now have a sense of how other’s are feeling.
-  Still unable to think abstractly – still do not have this capability, be patient.
-  Heating and cooling system still less efficient than adults – still make sure to give frequent water breaks (every 8-10 minutes).
-  Still much prefer playing to watching – keep everyone active during practice and remember, no lines.
-  Limited attention span (on average 15-20 seconds for listening, up to 20 minutes when engaged in a task) – this may vary greatly on any given day depending on school, diet, etc. Try to get a gauge each day and do not fight crankiness.
-  Have an understanding of time and sequence – they now understand “if I do this, then that happens”.
-  Many have incorporated a third or fourth speed into play – not all players, but many players now have incorporated a speed or two between stopped and as fast as possible.
-  Extremely aware of adult reactions – be very aware of your verbal and nonverbal reactions, as they look for your reaction frequently.
-  Seek out adult approval – be supportive when they ask about their performance or try to show you their skills. They very much need reassurance and you need to help build their confidence to try new things at this age
-  Begin to become aware of peer perception – a social order is beginning to develop. Be sensitive to this.
-  Wide range of abilities between children at this age – children all develop at varying paces. You may have an 8 year-old who seems more like a 10 year-old and one that seems more like a 6 year-old on the same team. Your challenge to is to manage this range in your practice in a way that challenges each player at a level that is reasonable for that player.
-  Some will keep score – the competitive motors churn faster in some than others. Surely some parents are fuelling the motors with their own. Regardless, we do not need to stress winning and losing at this age. Results should not be important at this age.
-  Beginning to develop motor memories – by attempting fundamental technical skills they are training their bodies to remember certain movements.
-  Still have active imaginations by adult standards, but some of the silliness that 4-5 year- olds allowed will not be appreciated by this group. Still use their imaginations, just watch their reactions to games to read how far you can go with things.






# FUNdamental - Practice Recommendations

## Practice Recommendations – FUNdamentals











-  Create a stimulating learning environment where the atmosphere is freedom and FUN.
-  Organize your practice to have all the children active, all of the time.
-  Playing situations work best for teaching understanding and basic game sense.
-  Game formats can progress from 3v3 to 5v5 as the children grow.
-  During small-sided games everyone should play all positions.
-  Let your players make decisions, expose them to working out problems and coming up with solutions.

## Practice Recommendations – FUNdamentals – U6

-  Individual Technical work, player and the ball.
-  General movements skills, jumping, running, hopping, skipping, should be incorporated into games and activities.
-  Introduction of basic skills (dribbling, running with the ball, etc.)
-  Introduce play in one direction, going towards a goal or target.
-  Everybody with a ball as much as possible.
-  Comfortable moving the body and ball together.
-  Dribbling – feet - rolling the ball, pushing it, stopping it, introduction of surfaces, running with the ball.

-  Passing Introduction (limited) – short passing, inside of foot, right and left.
-  Receiving –with feet, from ground only.
-  Ball Mastery with more movement, creativity, and all surfaces.
-  Games, activities, exercises should always be fun with lots of movement and activity.
-  Small-sided games are fun and challenging, 1v 1- 2v2 – 3v3.

## Practice Recommendations – FUNdamentals – U7

-  Individual Technical work, player and the ball.
-  Continue general movements skills, Jumping, running, hopping, skipping, should be incorporated into games and activities.
-  Everyone with a ball as much as possible.
-  Dribbling, running with the ball, striking the ball etc.
-  Introduce play in one direction, going towards a goal or target.
-  Everybody with a ball as much as possible.
-  Comfortable moving the body and ball together.
-  Dribbling – feet – rolling the ball, pushing it, stopping it, introduction of surfaces, running with the ball.
-  Passing Introduction (limited) – short passing, inside of foot, right and left.
-  Receiving –with feet, right and left from ground only.



# FUNdamental - Practice Recommendations

- ⚽ Ball Mastery with more movement, creativity, and all surfaces of both feet.
- ⚽ Games, activities, exercises should always be fun with lots of movement and activity.
- ⚽ Small-sided games are fun and challenging, 1v1- 2v2 – 3v3.

## Practice Recommendations – FUNdamentals – U8

- ⚽ Individual Technical work: take the mentality of the age and fit into activities developing technique.
- ⚽ Dribbling, passing, shooting.
- ⚽ Everybody with a ball as much as possible.
- ⚽ Comfortable moving the body and ball together.
- ⚽ Dribbling – feet - rolling the ball, pushing it, stopping it, introduction of surfaces, running with the ball, intro of specific moves (fakes, feints and turns) using above skills.
- ⚽ Passing – inside of foot, outside of foot, under the ball, techniques with movement, head up.
- ⚽ Receiving – feet, thighs, chest, – catching, receiving ball w/feet, preparing.
- ⚽ Finishing – both feet, volleys – all very introductory and basic.
- ⚽ Tackling – Introduction -basic techniques, block tackle, toe poke.
- ⚽ Ball Mastery with more movement, creativity, and all surfaces.

- ⚽ Individual Tactics –they are starting to conceptualize, so just allow for games/activities bring out decision-making opportunities.
- ⚽ Games, activities, exercises should mirror the game and tactical implications are within the game, but keep objectives on technical development.
- ⚽ Small-sided games are fun and challenging, 1v1-2v2-3v3-4v4 and 5v5.
- ⚽ Simple Tactics – get away, keep ball, get ball back, and pass it – all focusing at an individual stage that is about all they can understand, with no pressure.
- ⚽ Basic goalkeeping introduction e.g. catching, diving, jumping - for all players.

## Practice Recommendations – Methodology

- ⚽ Keep information brief and positive.
- ⚽ Show them what you want by demonstrating the activities and games.
- ⚽ Player Centred Coaching – let them make decisions, solve problems based on what they see and experience.
- ⚽ Keep the environment positive and happy.
- ⚽ Allow and encourage creativity and improvisation. Create the freedom to express themselves.
- ⚽ Keep the practices flowing, with limited stops.
- ⚽ Encourage and celebrate success.
- ⚽ Allow the players to deviate and be creative.
- ⚽ Keep it safe.

# FUNDamental - Practice Recommendations Matrix

DEVELOPMENT STAGE	FUNDamentals		
TECHNICAL	U6	U7	U8
Dribbling	1	1	1
Shooting	1	1	1
Running with the ball	1	1	1
Ball control	3	1	1
Passing	3	3	1
Receiving	3	1	1
Heading	4	4	4
Shielding the ball	4	4	3
Crossing	4	4	3
Finishing	4	4	3
1v1 Defending	4	4	3
1v1 Attacking	3	3	2

DEVELOPMENT STAGE	FUNDamentals		
PHYSICAL	U6	U7	U8
Agility	2	2	1
Balance	3	2	1
Coordination	3	2	1
Stamina	4	4	3
Strength	3	3	3
Speed	2	1	1
Suppleness	3	3	3
Acceleration	3	2	2
Reaction	3	2	2
Basic Motor Skills	1	1	1
Perception	1	1	1
Awareness	1	1	1
Other Sports	1	1	1

DEVELOPMENT STAGE	FUNDamentals		
SOCIAL/EMOTIONAL	U6	U7	U8
Listening	2	2	1
Cooperation	2	2	1
Communication	1	1	1
Sharing	3	2	1
Problem-solving	3	2	2
Decision-making	3	2	1
Empathy	3	2	2
Patience	3	2	2
Respect/Discipline	2	1	1
Fair play/Honesty	3	2	1

DEVELOPMENT STAGE	FUNDamentals		
PSYCHOLOGICAL/MENTAL	U6	U7	U8
Motivation	1	1	1
Self Confidence	1	1	1
Competitiveness	4	3	2
Concentration	3	3	3
Commitment	4	3	2
Self-Control	3	3	2
Determination	3	3	2

PRIORITY KEY	1 = HIGH	2 = MID	3 = LOW	4 = NOT APPLICABLE
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# FUNdamental - Practice Activities

## FOUR HOUSES

**TIME FRAME**  
8 - 10 minutes

### EMPHASIS

- Dribbling
- Turning
- Awareness
- Communication

### 4 CORNER CONTENT

#### Technical

Passing, dribbling, shooting, finishing

#### Tactical

Not applicable

#### Physical

Agility, balance, coordination, change of direction

#### Social

Listening, communication, cooperation

#### Psychological

Building Confidence, cooperation

### DIAGRAM



### INSTRUCTION

Set up 4 outer houses and central with in the middle with all the balls, as shown. Split the team into 4 groups. Have 1 player from each house leave and retrieve one ball at a time from the middle and dribble it back to their house. The next player can then leave to do the same. Continue until all the balls from the middle have been retrieved. Count the balls to see which house collected the most. Progress to taking a ball from another House- left foot only- sole of the foot only.

## KING/QUEEN OF THE RING

**TIME FRAME**  
5 - 8 minutes

### EMPHASIS

- Keep ball close
- Dribbling
- Have Fun

### 4 CORNER CONTENT

#### Technical

Passing, dribbling, shooting, finishing

#### Tactical

Not applicable

#### Physical

Agility, balance, coordination, change of direction

#### Social

Listening, communication, cooperation

#### Psychological

Building Confidence, cooperation

### DIAGRAM



### INSTRUCTION

#### Organization

Players have a ball each. Players must keep ball within a defined area. Players are encouraged to kick other balls out of area. When a player gets their ball kick out of the grid, they must leave the grid and practice a skill (3 juggles, toe taps etc) and then they are allowed to return to grid.

#### Alternatives

Progress to last man standing (King/Queen of the ring). When a player gets their ball knocked out of the square they are now "out" and are not allowed to return to the grid. They remain outside the grid cheering for their team-mates. Continue this until everybody is knocked out and there is only one player left. This player becomes the King/Queen of the Ring.



# FUNdamental - Coaching Measures

When young players are moving from the FUNdamentals stage and are ready to progress to the Learn to Train stage, the coach should have exposed them to, and taught them in, the following Technical, Physical, Social and Psychological skills

TECHNICAL		
Dribbling the ball	Right foot and left foot	Players are now introduced to dribbling at an opponent, introduce
	introduce opponent	change of speed and direction with the head up
Shooting the ball	Right foot and left foot	Using both feet over short distances, work on accuracy
Running with the ball	Right foot and left Foot	Using both feet, towards goal, away from goal. Vary speeds with head/eyes up
Turning with the ball	Right foot and left foot	Using both feet, introduce inside and outside turns with head/eyes up
Receiving the ball	Right foot and left foot. Introduce thigh and chest	Players are now introduced to underhand served ball to control on thigh and chest. Introduction to inside and outside of both feet to receive
Passing the ball	Right and left foot	Over short distances using both feet
PHYSICAL		
Agility	Moving in quick controlled, movements	Jumping, hopping, skipping, twisting bounding can be incorporated into games and activities
Balance	Right and left foot	Balance is improving with body in a variety of positions, one foot, crouched, on toes, etc
Coordination	Using small-sided games	Ability to twist and turn, change direction keeping movements and body under control
Stamina	Using small-sided Games	Using fun small-sided games and technical activities, endurance will improve
Strength	No weights to be used	Using players own body weight can be incorporated into games
Speed	Multi Directional	Improvement in multi-directional, linear and lateral speed can be utilized during this stage
Suppleness/Flexibility	Dynamic Stretching	Utilize in warm up mimicking soccer movements/dynamic movement exercises
Acceleration	Activities and Exercises	Use fun games to introduce quick change of speed
Reaction	For a variety of starting positions	Reaction speeds improve from laying, sitting, crouching, standing, jogging positions
SOCIAL/EMOTIONAL		
Listening	Listen Quietly	Players will have an improved ability to listen to details. Continue to be brief with information
Cooperation	With Coach and teammates	Although still egocentric, players will start to cooperate at a basic level
Communication	Verbal Communication	Communication with teammates is improving, giving information and encouragement
Sharing	Sharing the ball and ideas	Players will now start to understand that passing can help them be successful
Problem-solving	Working out mistakes	Players will display a basic understanding of working through their mistakes to correct them
Decision-making	Game decisions	Starting to work out simple game-related decisions. Some may still need assistance
Empathy	Assisting others in games	Starting to assist others with their problems in games and activities
Patience	Patience with themselves and others	Displaying an increased ability to show patience with themselves and teammates as they work through mastering techniques and skills
Respect/Discipline		Players are able to respect other players' equipment and space. Behaviour is more social

# FUNdamental - Coaching Measures

PSYCHOLOGICAL/MENTAL		
Motivation	Fun, rewarding activities	Improved players' motivation, through involvement in fun, exciting, challenging and successful activities
Self Confidence	Safe and positive environment	Players are now willing to express themselves more. Not afraid to make mistakes
Competitiveness	Displaying desire to be successful	Players are displaying the desire to be successful in practice activities and small-sided games
Concentration	An ability to stay on task	Improved attention span, improved ability to stay on task for slightly longer periods
Commitment	Apply themselves at practice and completing activities	Players are happily attending the majority of practices and games. Will complete activities and exercises during practice.
Self-Control	In control of emotions	While in stressful situations, players are starting to show an improvement in controlling their emotions
Determination	Displays a determination to complete tasks	Starting to not give up easily, starting to display a determination to complete tasks

DO	DON'T
Appreciate that all young players are growing and maturing at a different rate	Mistake levels of physical maturity for maturity in other areas
Be patient, supportive and encouraging with ALL the players in your squad	Assume that the current success of a player is an indicator of ongoing proficiency
Understand that all some players need is "time"	Over burden the players that represent the extreme early or late developer

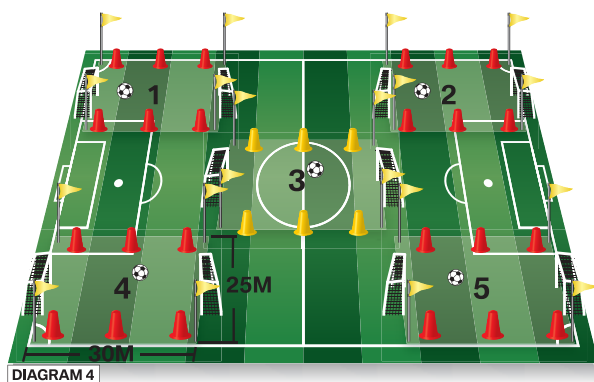
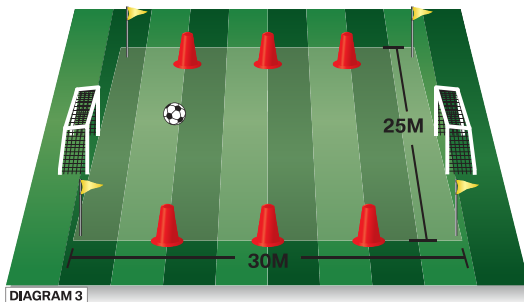
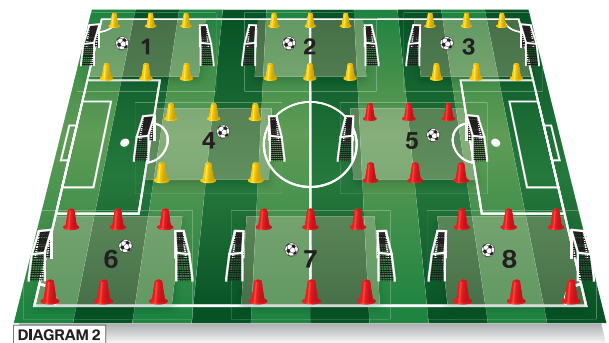
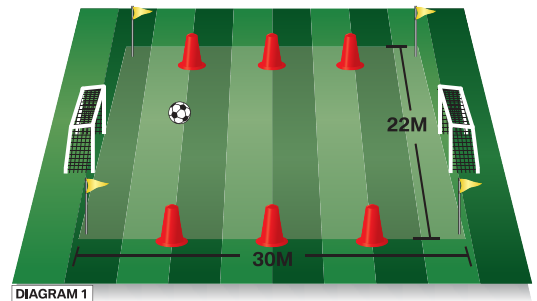
# FUNdamental - Field Organization

## 3v3 Fields

**3v3 soccer is an introduction to playing with teammates and playing against opposition other than their parents. There are no inter-Club games at this age group.**

Diagram 1, shows a 3v3 soccer field at its maximum dimensions, 30m x 22m. The goals are portable and should be no larger than 5ft x 8ft. Pop up nets (Pugg) are recommended. There is no need for any other field markings. The field in diagram 1 has been delineated using cones. In the absence of lines, cones are perfectly acceptable and suitable to create a mini soccer field.

Diagram 2, shows eight, 3v3 fields arranged on a 11v11 field. Using existing lines and cones with portable pop-up nets, several 3v3 fields can quickly be placed ready for kids to play.



## 5v5 Fields

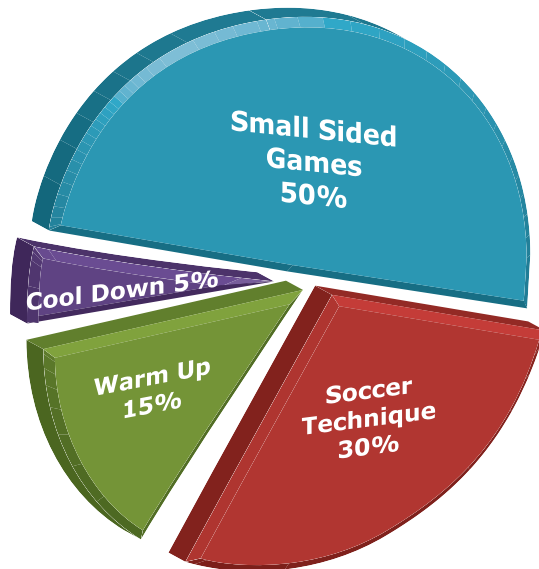
**5v5 fields have been designed to be used by under 7 and under 8 players.**

Diagram 3, shows an individual 5v5 field, 30m x 25m.

The field layout in diagram 4, shows a method of temporarily installing 5, 5-aside fields on an 11-aside field. As you can see the 11v11 field touch line and goal lines have been utilized for four of the fields. This would allow ten teams, or 50 players to be active on this playing area simultaneously.

# Learning to Train - U9, U10, U11 & U12

Below is a list of typical expectations and characteristics you can expect from Learn to Train players.



Learn to Train PRACTICE OBJECTIVES	
TECHNICAL	Improve possession and transition
PHYSICAL	Improve speed, agility, balance, coordination with/without the ball
TACTICAL	Minimal introduction at the older ages of this stage
SOCIAL	Cooperation with teammates in collective tasks during practice
PSYCHOLOGICAL	Create positive, challenging learning environment

Learn to Train PRACTICE CONTENT			
TECHNICAL 70%	PHYSICAL 17%	TACTICAL 3%	SOCIAL 10%

## Philosophy - "The golden age of learning"

The effect of the role model is very important at this stage. The coach's role becomes even more important as he or she becomes one of the player's role models, along with famous players and teams. At these ages players want to learn creative skills. Skill demonstration from the coach is very important as the players learn best by doing. Players are now moving from self-centred to self-critical, and they have a high stimulation level during basic skills training.

This is an important time to teach basic principles of play and to establish training ethics and discipline. Repetitions in training are important to developing technical excellence, but creating a fun and challenging environment is still essential for stimulating learning.

## Format

**Under 9 & 10 players play in a 7v7, including goalkeepers, environment.**

Maximum squad size is 12. This allows all players to get a good amount of playing time in each game. Players should continue to play in all positions including goalkeeper to get exposure and experience playing in the various areas of the field with different roles.

**Under 12 players play in a 9v9, including goalkeepers, environment.**

Maximum squad size is 16. This allows all players to get a good amount of playing time in each game. Players should play in a variety of positions to gain knowledge in the requirements of different positions.



# Learning to Train - Player Characteristics

## Typical Characteristics U9 & U10 Player











- ⚽ Attention span lengthens from U8 - they start to show the ability to sequence thought and actions.
- ⚽ They start to think ahead and think “If this, then that”.
- ⚽ They are more inclined towards wanting to play soccer rather than being told to play.
- ⚽ Demonstrate increased self-responsibility – bringing a ball, water and all gear should now be their complete responsibility.
- ⚽ They start to recognize fundamental tactical concepts.
- ⚽ Children at this age begin to become aware of peer pressure.
- ⚽ Players greatly affiliate with their team or their coach — “I play for the Tigers” or “I play for coach Amy’s team”.
- ⚽ Players at this age are extremely rule bound.
- ⚽ There is a wide continuum of maturity evident on most teams.
- ⚽ This is a crucial age for technical skill development.

## Typical Characteristics U11 & U12 Player












- ⚽ All children are maturing at different rates.
- ⚽ Players need to warm-up and stretch -muscle pulls and other nagging injuries are common otherwise.
- ⚽ Players will typically understand elemental abstract concepts and hypothetical situations.
- ⚽ They like to solve problems.
- ⚽ Peer evaluation is a constant.
- ⚽ Egos are sensitive.
- ⚽ Coordination may depend on whether or not they are in a growth spurt.
- ⚽ Technique still needs to be reinforced constantly.
- ⚽ Playing too much can lead to over use injuries.
- ⚽ Playing too much and not feeling like they have a choice in the matter can lead to burnout and drop-out.
- ⚽ Keep asking the players to be creative and to take risks.
- ⚽ Ask for feedback from them - they will tell you how things are going.
- ⚽ Try to hand over leadership and ownership of the team to them.

# Learning to Train - Practice Recommendations

## Learning to Train - Practice Recommendations

-  Continue to develop ball mastery in a larger environment with more teammates and opponents.
-  Start to develop other surfaces to control the ball.
-  Develop the ability to control the ball and look, introduce decision-making for the next play and apply the proper technique.
-  Develop the ability to run with the ball towards goal and away from goal to gain space and use width.
-  Develop dribbling 1v1 using different fakes and changes of direction, shielding at the older ages of the stage.
-  Develop passing the ball using different surfaces with both feet.
-  Introduce combination plays with 2 or 3 players.
-  Develop shooting skills, at longer distances. Introduce, volleys, bent shots and chips using different surfaces.
-  Introduce the use of width at u9 and u10 and depth at u11 and u12.
-  Develop the ability to look up and read GK position to make a good decision and apply proper technique.

## Learning to Train - Coaching Methodology

-  Small-sided games, allow the game to be the teacher.
-  Player centred- allow the players to make decisions.
-  Use Coaching Key Factors to teach the players.
-  Demonstrate what you would like the players to do.
-  Keep information positive, brief and concise.
-  Create a positive learning environment.
-  Set appropriate challenges.
-  Practices should have a theme EG. passing or shooting.
-  Use a variety of interventions EG. question and answer, guided discovery, command.
-  Consider a young player's self esteem.
-  Avoid children standing in lines.

# Learning to Train - Practice Recommendations Matrix

DEVELOPMENT STAGE	LEARN TO TRAIN			
TECHNICAL	U9	U10	U11	U12
Dribbling	1	1	1	1
Shooting	1	1	1	1
Running with the ball	1	1	1	1
Ball control	2	1	1	1
Passing	2	1	1	1
Receiving	2	1	1	1
Heading	4	4	4	3
Shielding the ball	3	2	2	1
Crossing	3	2	2	1
Finishing	3	2	2	1
1v1 Defending	3	3	2	1
1v1 Attacking	2	1	1	1

DEVELOPMENT STAGE	LEARN TO TRAIN			
PSYCHOLOGICAL/ MENTAL	U9	U10	U11	U12
Motivation	1	1	1	1
Self Confidence	1	1	1	1
Competitiveness	2	2	1	1
Concentration	2	2	1	1
Commitment	2	2	2	1
Self-Control	2	2	1	1
Determination	2	2	1	1

PRIORITY KEY	1 = HIGH	2 = MID	3 = LOW	4 = NOT APPLICABLE
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# Learning to Train - Practice Recommendations Matrix

DEVELOPMENT STAGE	LEARN TO TRAIN			
SOCIAL/EMOTIONAL	U9	U10	U11	U12
Listening	2	2	1	1
Cooperation	2	2	1	1
Communication	1	1	1	1
Sharing	2	1	1	1
Problem-solving	2	2	1	1
Decision-making	2	2	1	1
Empathy	3	2	1	1
Patience	3	2	1	1
Respect/Discipline	2	2	1	1
Fair play/Honesty	2	1	1	1

DEVELOPMENT STAGE	LEARN TO TRAIN			
TACTICAL	U9	U10	U11	U12
Possession	2	2	2	2
Transition	2	2	2	2
Combination Play	2	2	2	1
Switching Play	4	4	4	3
Counter Attacking	4	4	4	4
Playing out from the back	2	2	2	1
Attacking Principles	3	3	3	3
Zonal Defending	4	4	4	4
Pressing	3	2	2	2
Retreat	3	3	3	3
Recovery	3	3	3	3
Compactness	3	3	3	2

PRIORITY KEY	1 = HIGH	2 = MID	3 = LOW	4 = NOT APPLICABLE
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# Learning to Train - Practice Recommendations Matrix

DEVELOPMENT STAGE	LEARN TO TRAIN			
PHYSICAL	U9	U10	U11	U12
Agility	1	1	1	1
Balance	1	1	1	1
Coordination	1	1	1	1
Stamina	2	2	2	1
Strength	2	2	2	1
Speed	1	1	1	1
Suppleness	2	2	2	2
Acceleration	1	1	1	1
Reaction	1	1	1	1
Basic Motor Skills	1	1	1	1
Perception	1	1	1	1
Awareness	1	1	1	1

PRIORITY KEY	1 = HIGH	2 = MID	3 = LOW	4 = NOT APPLICABLE
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Age	Format	Games Per Week	Practice Per Week*	Duration	Ball Size	Field Size	Goal Size	Rules	# Sessions
U9 & U10	7v7 inc. GK's	1/Festival	1 - Rec 1/2 - Dev	60-90 mins (Practice) 50 mins (Game)	4 (or 5 light)	35x55m	6'x16'	SNS Mini Rules	15-20 Summer 10-20 Winter
U11& U12	9v9 inc. GK's	1/2	1 - Rec 2/3 - Dev	60-90 mins (Practice) 70 mins (Game)	4 (or 5 light)	50x70m	6'x18'	FIFA Rules	15-20 Summer 10-20 Winter

**\*See Recreation & Development Matrix for more detail**

# Learning to Train - Practice Activities

## DYNAMIC MOVEMENT (warm up)

### TIME FRAME

5 minutes

### COACHING POINTS

Carry out the exercises at a jogging pace, initially.

Exaggerate the movements to get a full range of motion.

Focus on balanced movement on each side of the body.

### 4 CORNER CONTENT

#### Technical

Passing, receiving

#### Tactical

Support

#### Physical

Agility, balance, coordination, change of direction

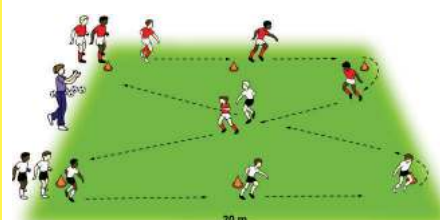
#### Social

Listening, communication, cooperation

#### Psychological

Building confidence, cooperation

### DIAGRAM



### INSTRUCTION

Players carry out dynamic movements as they move diagonally across the square to a new starting position. Each pair carries out the exercises at 5m intervals. Repeat each exercise at least twice before moving on to the next.

Examples of exercises to use:

1. Jog 2. Skip & groin stretch (inside to outside) 3. Jockey backwards (right & left) 4. Skip & groin stretch (outside to inside) 5. Skipping forward 6. Skip & kick (left & right) 7. Skipping sideways 8. Skip & upper body twist (right & left) 9. Heel flicks 10. Cross steps 11. High knee raises 12. Wide steps

## DRIBBLING & CROSSING - WING PLAY

### TIME FRAME

20 minutes

### COACHING POINTS

Take a long first touch to take space quickly. Touch the ball inside slightly to prepare to cross.

Take a big last step & watch ball as you strike it. Strike through the middle of the ball using the instep. Aim for the back half of the box.

### 4 CORNER CONTENT

#### Technical

Passing, dribbling, crossing, finishing

#### Tactical

Support

#### Physical

Agility, balance, coordination, change of direction

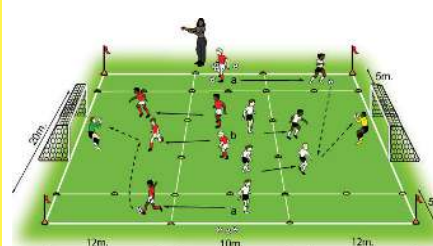
#### Social

Listening, communication, cooperation

#### Psychological

Building confidence, cooperation

### DIAGRAM



### INSTRUCTION

Groups of six, plus two GKs working in a playing area of 34x30m.

A 5m wing channel on each side of the playing area.

Each group attacks a goal at opposite ends.

Markers to indicate the playing area as shown

# Learning to Train - Coaching Measurements

The players have now progressed into the Learn to Train phase of their development At the later stages of the Learn to Train phase the concept of tactics are slowly introduced The focus is still on the technical skills required in the game, with small-sided games being the main teaching tool used

TECHNICAL		
Dribbling	Right and left, various surfaces	Maintain close control at pace in tight situations
Shooting	Right and left, various surfaces	Accurate, more powerful shots from longer distance, bent, chip and volley
Running with the ball	Right and left feet	Running at various speeds with the ball under control with head up/eyes up
Ball Control	Ball mastery	Continue improvement of ball mastery in reduced spaces; more teammates and opponents
Passing	Right and left, various surfaces	Player should be passing the ball accurately over distances 10m – 25m. Intro passing with the chest
Receiving	Right, left, chest, thighs	Receiving the ball from ground and air whilst under some pressure
Heading	Using forehead, eyes on ball	No heading a fully inflated ball until 12 years old. Deflated softer ball can be used to get technique
Shielding the ball	Using body to protect the ball	Introduction to shielding, understanding how to use the body to protect the ball with head up/eyes up
Crossing	Right and left foot, various surfaces	Crossing the ball into the penalty area, using various surfaces. Introduction of various types of crosses.
Finishing	Scoring from close range	First touch finishing, volleys, passes, shots from close distances.
1v1 Defending	Defending as an individual	Pressing, preventing forward play, preventing crosses

TACTICAL		
Possession	Individual and team's ability to retain the ball	Introduce later in the stage. Understand angles and distances of support and that player mobility will allow team possession to take place.
Transition	Recognizing when the ball is lost or retained	Introduce later in the stage. Changing from attacking to defending and vice versa.
Combination Play	Player awareness to combination opportunities	Introduce later in the stage. Recognizing when wall pass, take over, set up etc. are available to play.
Switching play	Taking up correct positions to allow the switch to take place	Introduce later in the stage. The ability to pass the ball from one side of the field to the other, quickly
Playing out from the back	Confident & comfortable playing close to their own goal	Introduce later in the stage. The ability to be confident with the ball and to build the attack from close to their own goal
Attacking Principles	Players understanding	Introduce later in the stage. Introduce players to the 5 attacking principles of play
Pressing	Understanding when to press	Introduce later in the stage. Individual pressing, closing down the ball carrier
Retreat	Understanding when to retreat and to where	Introduce later in the stage. Individually and as a group to get between the ball and the goal.
Recovery	Understanding when and where to recover too	Introduce later in the stage. After getting beat, making correct recovery runs to get in a good defensive position.



# Learning to Train - Coaching Measurements

SOCIAL/EMOTIONAL		
Listening	Listen Quietly	Players will now have an improved ability to listen to details from the coach and others. Continue to be brief with information.
Cooperation	With Coach and teammates	Players now start to cooperate with each other more, on and off the field
Communication	Verbal communication	Communication with teammates is improving, giving helpful performance information and encouragement. Communication with coach is developing
Sharing	Sharing the ball and ideas	More advanced knowledge of understanding that passing can help them be successful as an individual and as a team. Sharing of basic knowledge is now introduced by players
Problem-solving	Working out mistakes	Players will display a basic understanding of working through their mistakes to correct them. Players are understanding that mistakes are allowed and part of learning
Decision making	Game decisions	Players are now working out simple game-related decisions. Some may still need assistance
Empathy	Assisting others in games	Starting to assist others with their problems in games and activities
Patience	Patience with themselves and others	Displaying an increased ability to demonstrate patience with themselves and teammates as they work through mastering techniques and skills
Respect/Discipline	Respecting others and displaying good behaviour	Players are able to respect other players' equipment and space. Behaviour is more social. Now starting to respect officials, opponents etc.
Fair Play/Honesty	Playing within the LOTG	Better understanding of the basic laws of the game

PSYCHOLOGICAL/MENTAL		
Motivation	Fun, rewarding, successful activities	Improved player's motivation, through involvement in fun, exciting, challenging and successful activities. Player's success is now encouraging them to attempt more difficult tasks
Self Confidence	Safe, positive nurturing environment	Players are now willing to express themselves more. Not afraid to make mistakes. Creativity and expression is now starting to show itself more. Involve players in officiating or leading activities at practice. Continue to use positive reinforcement with players.
Competitiveness	Displaying desire to be successful	Players are displaying the desire to be successful in practice activities and small-sided games. This competitiveness may have to be managed to keep it in line.
Concentration	An ability to stay on task	Improved attention span, improved ability to stay on task for slightly longer periods. Involve players in leading tasks and making decisions at practice
Commitment	Apply themselves at practice and completing activities	Players are happily attending the majority of practices and games. Will complete activities and exercises during practice. Be patient but demand fairly of players
Self-Control	In control of emotions	While in stressful situations, players are starting to show an improvement in controlling their emotions
Determination	Displays a determination to complete tasks	Starting to not give up easily. Starting to display a determination to complete tasks and to be their best

# Learning to Train - Coaching Measurements

PHYSICAL		
Agility	Moving in quick controlled, movements	Continued Improvement in twisting, turning etc. Can be developed during warm-ups, cool downs and small-sided games
Balance	Right and left foot	Continued Improvement, can now balance in more control, in a variety of positions. Can be further developed during warm-ups, cool downs and games
Coordination	Using small-sided games	Multiple movements are smoother and more controlled. Can be further developed during warm-ups, cool downs and small-sided games
Stamina	Using small-sided games	Low priority. Developed through activities and small-sided games.
Strength	No weights to be used	Low priority but can be developed through activities and games that work with the child's body weight (as opposed to weights and formal exercises)
Speed	Multi Directional	Improvements in fast cadence of movement, developing linear, lateral and multi directional speed using exciting games and exercises.
Suppleness	Dynamic Stretching	Continue with exercises that mimic movements that are required in sport e.g. dynamic stretching. Should include whole body movements, shoulders, trunk, hips, knees
Acceleration	Activities and Exercises	Should be developed using challenging, fun games that use acceleration as a part of the activity
Reaction	For a variety of starting positions	Continue to work on reaction speeds from laying, sitting, crouching, standing, jogging positions. Can be developed during warm-ups, cool downs and games
Basic Motor Skills	Moving in quick, controlled, smooth movements	Develop in fun games and activities.
Perception	Right and left foot	Introduce and develop playing small-sided games
Awareness	Using small-sided games	Introduce and develop playing small-sided games

# Learning to Train - Field Organization

## Advantages of Playing on Smaller Fields for Learning to Train Stage:

- More efficient use of field space.
- Matches can be played simultaneously across a full-size field.
- Children are physically more efficient in smaller space.
- Children are actively involved for a longer period of time.
- It takes less time to score a goal or advance to goal.
- Greater success rate for the players.
- More shots on goal.
- More saves from the Goalkeeper.

## 7v7 Fields

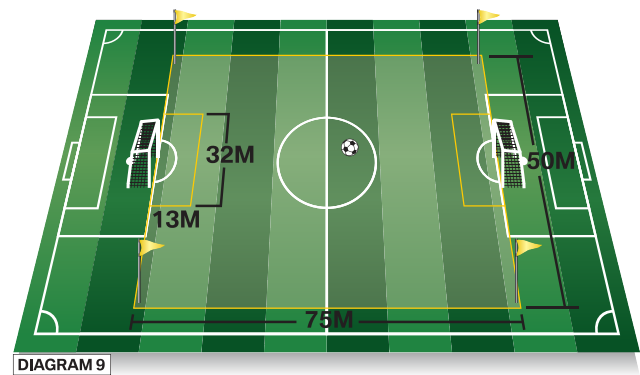
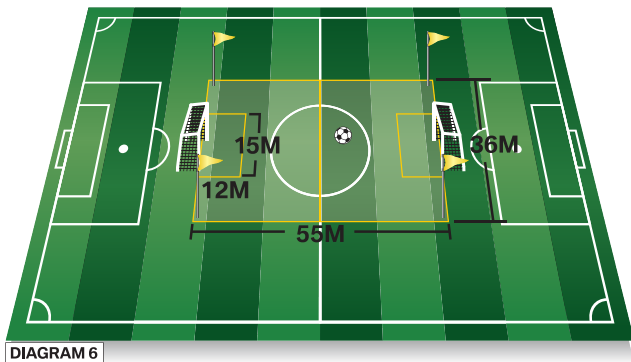
7v7 fields are designed to be used by children 9 and 10 years of age as seen in diagram 6.

## 9v9 Fields

9v9 fields are designed to be used by children 11 and 12 years of age as seen in diagram 9.

## Note

Like all soccer fields a range of sizes is allowed. The below diagrams are a suggested range, but its understood that we have to work with existing fields and facilities. It is the aim to meet the sizes as shown above but reasonable flexibility is allowable. For competitive soccer permanent field lining is preferred.



# Recreation vs Development

## Recreation Program Philosophy

**Participatory model. Provide a fun and safe soccer experience where kids can develop their skills by “playing the game”**

Every player, new or experienced, gets to play!! Programs should try to create teams with equal numbers of players at all skill levels so that there is parity between the teams. Furthermore, they should strive to make sure that every player plays the same amount of time and that all players get to experience all positions.

## Development Program Philosophy

**Developmental model. Designed for players that want professional coaching, to play in a more competitive environment and are committed to a longer season and travel, EG - RTC & Academy.**

Competitive Soccer shares many of the same ideals and goals as Recreational Soccer. Competitive soccer takes a larger time and cost commitment. Practice time, number of games, length of season and travel requirements all increase.

### Recreation Matrix

Stage	Practice to Game Ratio	Games Per Week	*Fair Playing Time	Travel Time
FUNDamental	1:1 or 2:1	1/Festival	Fair time in all positions (20mins)	Within District
Learning to Train	1:1 or 2:1	1/Festival	Fair time in all positions (25-30mins)	45-60mins each way

### Development Matrix

Stage	Practice to Game Ratio	Games Per Week	*Fair Playing Time	Travel Time
FUNDamental	2:1 or 3:1	1/Festival	Fair time in all positions (15-20mins)	Within District
Learning to Train	2:1 or 3:1	1/Festival	Fair time in all positions (20-25mins)	45-60mins each way for individual game OR unlimited for sanctioned SNS games & showcase events