

Player's Academy of Soccer Skills

'SESSION PLANNING'

A PRESENTATION BY NEIL HULL

NEILHULL@PASS1ON1.COM

Player's Academy of Soccer Skills

WWW.PASS1ON1.COM

SPRING TRAINING PLAN FOR U15 GIRLS SOCCER TEAM.

Aims of the season.

- Educate the team in a 1-4-4-2 formation, with the ability to change to a 1-4-3-3
- Bring the defenders into the attack
- Teach zonal systems, with transition to a sweeping zone
- Improve set pieces, corners & throw ins
- Making the GK part of the defense

Warm Ups / Functional Drills

- Shadow play
- Pressure grids, pressure drills
- Gaining a set play
- Technical touch and surfaces

Imprinting a style of play.... Tactical and technical functional training

- Zonal defense with the possibility of a drop sweeper or using the GK as the sweeper...Emphasizing the role of 'total soccer'
- Defense and Gk reading the 'over the top' ball and anticipating
- Breaking out of defensive third to maintain possession into the middle third.
- Drifting midfield to leave weak side open and create pressure on the ball.
- Build up play in midfield
- Visual clues from our team
- Transitioning the field, using the full width.
- Forwards making runs across the oppositions defense
- Steering opposition into pressure.
- Attacking runs off the ball
- Transitioning from attack to defense – Lines of confrontation
- Defensively tucking in behind the oppositions attack, dropping back to slow down the oppositions attack and keep the ball in front of our team, thus creating a 'wall' of players

Player's responsibilities

- Questions
- Transferring the coached game to the competitive game
- Leadership, 'eleven captains' reinforcing the game on the field
- Communication
- Fitness
- Commitment
- Reducing Individual errors. **Do not give away possession**
- Vision – Play with your head up
- Reading the game – Anticipating the opposition.

00 PASS Soccer Team



| Team Roster | Emergency Contact | Phone Number | Email |
|----------------------|-------------------|--------------|-------|
| Player 1 Player 2 | | | |

COACHING STAFF

| Name | Training | Phone Number | Email |
|-----------|----------|-----------------|---|
| Neil Hull | Director | 210 286 3070 | Pass@satx.rr.com - - - |

ADMINISTRATIVE STAFF

| Name | Management | Phone Number | Email |
|------|------------|--------------|-------|
| | | | |

SPRING 2011 TOURNAMENTS

| Tournament | Location | Fields | Website |
|------------|----------|--------|------------------|
| | | | - - - - |

SPRING 2011 TRAINING PROGRAM

| Week | Topic | Type | Objective |
|-----------|-------------------------------------|------------|-------------------------------|
| 1 | <i>Dribbling</i> | Technical | Ball Confidence and Control |
| | <i>Passing /Receiving</i> | Technical | Passing / Receiving Mechanics |
| | <i>Restarts/Set Pieces</i> | Tactical | Understanding |
| | <i>Shooting / Finishing</i> | Technical | Proper Shooting Mechanics |
| 2 | <i>Speed Dribbling 1</i> | Technical | Running with the Ball |
| | <i>1v1 Individual Attacking</i> | Technical | Beating an Opponent |
| 3 | <i>Short Passing</i> | Technical | Pace and Accuracy |
| | <i>2v1 Support</i> | Tactical | Angle and Distance |
| 4 | <i>Open Session</i> | | |
| | <i>1v1 Individual Defending</i> | Tactical | Angle and Distance |
| 5 | <i>Turning with the ball</i> | Technical | Individual Technique |
| | <i>Combination Play</i> | Functional | Recognize when to combine |
| 6 | <i>Block Tackle</i> | Technical | Proper Mechanics |
| | <i>Defending (Pressure / Cover)</i> | Tactical | When and how to win ball |
| 7 | <i>Open Session</i> | | |
| | <i>Speed of Play</i> | Tactical | Process of thinking ahead |
| 8 | <i>Receiving Air Balls</i> | Technical | Proper Mechanics (Instep) |
| | <i>Transition</i> | Tactical | Attacking to Defending |
| 9 | **SPRING BREAK** | | |
| 10 | <i>Short, Short, Long</i> | Technical | Pace and Accuracy |
| | <i>Defending Set Pieces</i> | Functional | Setting up a Wall |
| 11 | <i>Long Distance Shooting</i> | Technical | Strength and Power |
| | <i>Finishing (Combination)</i> | Tactical | Creating Goal Scoring |
| 12 | <i>Passing w/Outside of Foot</i> | Technical | Bending the Pass |
| | <i>Possession (Small Group)</i> | Tactical | Keep the Ball Collectively |
| 13 | <i>Open Session</i> | | |
| | <i>Reading the Game 1</i> | Tactical | Knowing the options |
| 14 | <i>Finishing (Volleying)</i> | Technical | Proper Mechanics (Instep) |
| | <i>Reading the Game 2</i> | Tactical | Recognizing Visual Cues |
| 15 | <i>Attacking Heading</i> | Technical | To Score To Pass |
| | <i>Crossing and Finishing</i> | Functional | Near and Far Post Runs |
| 16 | <i>Defensive Heading</i> | Technical | Clearing out of the Box |
| | <i>Defending (Balance)</i> | Tactical | Track Players Making Runs |
| 17 | <i>Receiving Air Balls</i> | Technical | Proper Mechanics (Chest) |
| | <i>Counter-Attack</i> | Tactical | Finding the Deepest Player |
| 18 | <i>Open Session</i> | | |

| | | | |
|------------------------------|--------------------------------|------------|-------------------------------|
| | <i>Attacking (Unbalancing)</i> | Tactical | Playing off the ball |
| 19 | <i>Shooting (Inside Foot)</i> | Technical | Bending w/Inside of Foot |
| | <i>Executing Set Pieces</i> | Functional | Scoring Direct/Indirect Kicks |
| 20 | **SELECT TRYOUTS** | | |
| Catch Them Being Good | | | |

Time Sensitive Practice Schedule

Practice Planner

6:00pm – 6:10pm Ball Mastery (*Warm up and Individual Ball Work*)

- Exercise 1 thru 4 (Coerver Coaching)

6:10pm – 6:20pm Fun Games (*Create a positive working atmosphere*)

- Freeze Tag/It
- Group Dribbling
- Knockout
- Follow the leader

6:20pm – 6:28pm Speed (*Train for speed with and without the ball*)

- Exercise 1 thru 6 (Coerver Coaching)

6:28pm – 6:30pm (Water Break)

6:30pm – 6:48pm Passing and Receiving (*Building Block of Coerver Pyramid*)

- Exercise 1 thru 6 (Coerver Coaching)
- Exercise 1 thru 6 (Coerver Coaching)

or

6:30pm – 6:48pm 1v1 Attacking (*Introduce the move in a no-pressure context*)

- Move 1 – Inside Cut
- Move 2 – Outside Cut

6:48pm – 6:58pm Finishing (*Incorporate 1v1 move with finishing exercise*)

- Exercise 1 thru 10 (Coerver Coaching)

6:58pm – 7:00pm (Water Break)

7:00pm – 7:25pm Small Sided Games (*Encourage players to use their skills*)

- 30x40 yard area
- 4 goal game

7:25pm – 7:30pm Sprint (*An uplifting way to end practice*)

- Speed Competition

Example of a Developmental Based Training Plan For U 10 - U12



| Week | Type | General Topic Covered | Topic/Assessment |
|------|---------------------|---------------------------------|---|
| 1 | Technical/Intensive | Coerver Pyramid | Ball Mastery/Moves 1v1+ |
| | Tactical/Extensive | Principles of Attack | Penetration/SSG (Small Sided Games) |
| 2 | Technical/Intensive | Coerver Pyramid | Ball Mastery/Moves 1v1+ |
| | Tactical/Extensive | Principles of Attack | Penetration |
| 2 | Technical/Intensive | Coerver Pyramid | Ball Mastery/Moves 1v1+ |
| | Tactical/Extensive | Principles of Attack/Possession | Penetration/Support |
| 4 | Technical/Intensive | Coerver Pyramid | Receiving and Passing |
| | Tactical/Extensive | Principles of Attack/Possession | Penetration/Support |
| 5 | Technical/Intensive | Coerver Pyramid | Receiving and Passing |
| | Tactical/Extensive | Principles of Attack/Possession | Penetration/Support/Width/Mobility |
| 6 | Technical/Intensive | Coerver Pyramid | Receiving and Passing |
| | Tactical/Extensive | Principles of Attack/Possession | Penetration/Support/Width/Mobility |
| 7 | Technical/Intensive | Coerver Pyramid | Finishing |
| | Tactical/Extensive | Principles of Attack/Possession | Penetration/Support/Width/Mobility |
| 8 | Technical/Intensive | Coerver Pyramid | Finishing |
| | Tactical/Extensive | Principles of Attack/Possession | Penetration/Support/Width/Mobility/Creativity |
| 9 | Technical/Intensive | Coerver Pyramid | Group Play/Finishing |
| | Tactical/Extensive | Principles of Attack/Possession | Penetration/Support/Width/Mobility/Creativity |
| 10 | Technical/Intensive | Coerver Pyramid | Group Play/Finishing |
| | Tactical/Extensive | | Penetration/Support/Width/Mobility/Creativity |
| 11 | Technical/Intensive | Coerver Pyramid | Group Play/Finishing |
| | Tactical/Extensive | | Penetration/Support/Width/Mobility/Creativity |
| 12 | Technical/Intensive | Coerver Pyramid | Choice |
| | Tactical/Extensive | | Penetration/Support/Width/Mobility/Creativity |
| 13 | Technical/Intensive | Coerver Pyramid | Choice |
| | Tactical/Extensive | | Penetration/Support/Width/Mobility/Creativity |
| 14 | Technical/Intensive | Coerver Pyramid | Choice |
| | Tactical/Extensive | | Penetration/Support/Width/Mobility/Creativity |

| | | | |
|----|---------------------|-----------------|---|
| 15 | Technical/Intensive | Coerver Pyramid | |
| | Tactical/Extensive | | Penetration/Support/Width/Mobility/Creativity |
| 16 | | | |
| | | | |
| 17 | | | |
| | | | |

The Soccer Coach as a “Facilitator” By Neil Hull

The article has recently been published in National Journals and websites please feel free to read and implement ideas, but if copied or distributed retain credit to the author. For more information: www.pass1on1.com or e mail neilhull@pass1on1.com

What is a ‘Facilitator’? The dictionary describes it as: A person responsible for leading or coordinating the work of a group: To make easy or easier: Somebody who makes progress easier.

How do these definitions transfer into our environment of coaching of soccer? What exactly are we, as coaches, trying to facilitate: Environment, players, philosophies, tactics, techniques, emotions? The list, as I hope to cover, branches out from a root foundation of organization to the fruit of specific needs of the individual player. Another question maybe we should look at: While the coach is facilitating his team/players who is facilitating him/her, or possibly, now the word at a higher level could align itself with organization/coaching direction or management?

As covered in the NSCAA’s curriculum at the Parent, State and Regional levels, facilitation is a topic, possibly, requiring a little expansion from its sketch map orientation to its overlapping brush strokes, completing a schematic coaching picture.

Addressing the needs of five to eight year old players in teams, recreation programs, or academies is vital to the growth and development with in the game. As Bill Beswick, a world-class sports psychologist working with the English National team, states ‘it is important to build the complete player, technically, tactically, psychologically and emotionally’. All this for a five year old, why not let him just play? That is exactly, in my opinion, what we should do. The game is the teacher. Although behind the scenes, the educated coach has facilitated the training session perfectly, allowing the training session to be the educational factor in developing the player cognitively as well physically. Thus, it has been created to meet the teaching demands of the game, not just thought about it in the car on the way to training, then pinged off the cuff, benefiting no one, except maybe the bank manager! Do you know any of these? The educated coach has thought out his session, planned, coordinated it, so the training itself becomes the coach. This is not stating the session has to be rigid, because as we all can appreciate, once the first bullet has been fired the battle can change, and we, as coaches, have to be able to adapt.

I think we all know and understand how difficult, on occasion, it can be to teach five year olds, what's the answer? One answer might be to stop directly teaching them and let them learn socratically, from the session. As the coach, you remain on the outside creating the flow and allowing maximum activity whilst in the session; your facilitation has created a learning environment, increasingly becoming a tool of self-teaching.

Let me explain further offering examples. We have a group of six year olds working on trapping and controlling the ball. How do we as a coach facilitate this practice to create success, teaching advancement in the technical, tactical, psychological and emotional areas, advancing the complete player? With out continually stopping and starting the session: Thus removing the 'fun factor' from their game. Facilitation and planning at this level is a major factor. The session should be based on fun activities, or the focus will be lost and players will be building mud pies rather than the foundations of their careers!

Whilst at the NSCAA's convention this year, I was fortunate enough to attend a Coerver sponsored session coached by Charlie Cooke, head of Coerver USA as well as many others from coaches like Gerald Huiller (Liverpool & Lyon) and Steve McLaren (England & Manchester United). Many of the areas I am going to discuss naturally fell into place because of experience and continual repetition of a proven, well-facilitated coaching methodology. To the average coach watching, he or she witnessed flow, and the continual challenging development of a technical skill, but what facilitated this?

To plan the session, build it with the end in mind. According to Beswick he has four factors that create the total player, Technical, Tactical, Psychological (mental) and emotional how about using these as building blocks when facilitating the session.

Technically the session starts with a fun game that creates masses of repetition, enjoyment and sets the mood for the session on the chosen technique. Ideally, each player has his own ball. An idea here might be something like 'King of the ring'. I think we all know that one! If this game is reinforced with the topic of dribbling in mind, correctly facilitated, it will become a teaching tool in its self. Not only reinforcing dribbling skills but also synergistic skills like shielding change of direction/speed, ability to attack space etc. These supporting skills all assist in developing the complete player to dribble the ball with confidence under increasing pressure. Meanwhile the young player is only having fun, enjoying dribbling!

Tactically: We bring another player in to the technical game working off the ball. Now allowing for tactics, how to get the ball from one player to another. Now it might become 'pairs: King of the Ring', keeping it simple. This is generally not expressed or explained to our six year olds, just directed, after all they are just playing soccer via a fun game! Nevertheless, the coach knows they are developing first touch, close ball control, shielding, passing, etc. Why? Because this is how the session has been facilitated and designed. Very little if no coaching has arisen the six year olds are just playing!

Psychologically: When the players arrive at the field they see it all set out for them, what was once a pasture is now their training ground, a challenge to figure out what the practice will be. Well organized, their coach is dressed correctly and their 'mind set' is created immediately with a fun game to get them in the spirit of the session, the emphasis is based on the excitement and self-competition of the intro game, not the coach coaching. The most VITAL aspect of facilitation is choosing the correct games so they are 'self teachers'. The game is selected so it can assist in clearing self-doubt and the talent can emerge. The biggest ceiling on talent is self-belief; this self-belief is built by achievement (Beswick). This is where age dependent or conditioned games are the cognitive challenge for the coach creating environments perfected to the level of players being coached. The same game can be used for a five or a fifteen year old, the difference being the name ('monkey in the middle' as opposed to 'keep away'), speed, intensity and the application and coaching direction of the chosen game. Opening up the door to the mind, body and intrinsic motivation of the player, offering them a bridge instead of a vortex. Choosing the correct age specific technical, tactical and physical progressions in the facilitation of the coaching session is the key.

Emotional. This can be referred to the spirit or the heart, emotions can run wild in an under six session, but we are looking to facilitate the session correctly to create an environment of enthusiasm, and developmental learning and individual feedback. Anson Dorrance speaks of his warm up techniques for his successful women's teams at the college level. The first 5-10 minutes of his warm up is dedicated to just letting the players sit and chat or gossip about their days. He does not involve himself or his coaching staff. Just lets the girls get on with it! From here the session starts, he has their attention and theirs his. Possibly, if this did not happen, they would talk through his warm up and he would lose the teaching moments via distraction. He probably facilitates his time accordingly and brings them, the team, out early or runs the session late to allow this social environment to exist, but this has all been calculated in his prior planning and preparation, developed from years of experience.

This experience of facilitation with the younger players is a process the coach carries with him or her into all the older age groups. To coordinate the group/team correctly is setting them up for success just by the style of the session. Outside of coaching methods, via systems like rehearse, replay, restart, the sessions ethos has developed cognitively as well as the maturing players. Facilitation is a huge asset that a coach with natural ability or a depth of experience brings to the field. An asset that we in the educational fields should be looking to reinforce at all opportunities. If we are in charge of the team as a parent or younger coach gaining experience, facilitation, in my opinion, is more important than trying to teach technically. If a training session is facilitated correctly, it will determine the outcome and advance the teams learning environment.

Finally, just for thought, an article I recently read in the FA coaching Journal about athletic development: It takes 10000 hours of practice to create a world-class athlete. Whether a swimmer, gymnast or soccer player. In our case, this means roughly means 3 hours practice a day, 7 days a week, 52 weeks a year, for a period of 10 years; age 6-16 as an example. Hopefully just from this study if a player wishes to play at the highest levels, ineffective facilitation is counter productive to his or her dreams, and without dreams, sometimes all we have left are nightmares!

[The Secret of Planning – part 1](#)

Posted March 22, 2010 by Admin in [Coach Education](#). Tagged: [planning](#), [pre season](#), [Roger Wilkinson](#). [Leave a Comment](#)

This latest post addresses one of the hardest yet most vital elements of coaching – developing a game style. This article is brought to you in 4 parts. The article will take you on a journey that will give you the understanding to develop a unique game style for your team!

The Secret of Planning – Part 1.

By Roger Wilkinson

Planning Step 1 – The Playing vision

“Great coaches always have a picture in their minds of how they want their team to play”,
Vince Lombardi.

No meaningful coaching can take place, with players of ANY age unless the coach has a clear vision of his game style. The coach is like a driver setting off on a coaching journey, they must know where they want to finish up. You cannot coach a 5-year-old if you do not have a clear idea of how you want them to play when they are 25!

In soccer we have many examples of coaches who have created successful teams and have changed the way the game is played because they understood the importance of creating a game style. Helmut Schoen the German national coach in the 60's and 70s produced a style full of athleticism, skill and innovative positional play by changing the role of the sweeper from a destructive to a constructive player. Schoen's vision produced the game style that ensured German International success over a long period of time because it gave SIGNPOSTS to grassroots coaches in Germany to produce the skill and tactical acumen in their young players to make them successful at a later age.

A game style is NOT a playing formation. Brazil have won the World Cup 5 times since its inception, during that time they have changed their formation a number of times from 4-2-4 to 4-4-2 to 4-3-3 but always their game style (with slight variations) has remained constant.

Rinus Michel's the Dutch national coach in the 70's and 80's had a playing vision entitled. Total Football. Michel's based his game style on individualism and high level skill allied to clever player rotation. Michel's work elevated the Dutch, a relatively small nation, to one of the power houses of World and European football. Just as significant was the way the Louis van Gaal the first team manager at Ajax Football Club extended and adapted Michel's vision at club level. Van Gaal recognized that the most important team coaches at the club were the JUNIOR and YOUTH coaches. He ensured they fully understood the first team game style and they were set to work to produce a conveyor belt of young players who eventually played successfully for Ajax and Holland.

The visionary coach can be working at any level.

At Crystal Palace in the 80's the youth coach John Cartwright developed a game style based on high individualism combined with clever tactical play and his young players provided the base for Palace's most successful era. The young first team were labelled "the Team of the Eighties". More importantly Cartwright developed a coaching methodology used by all development coaches at the club based on a street football-chaos learning programme supported by tactical input. This methodology produced natural players at all ages that could con join with their team mates.

So, the message for all coaches is this:

THE CRUCIAL FIRST STEP IS TO DEVELOP A PLAYING VISION – A GAME STYLE.

How does a coach develop their playing vision? To simplify the answer to this question break it into 2 parts:

1. Watch great teams play, Brazil, France, Holland, Argentina, German, Barcelona, Manchester Utd, Bayern Munich, Arsenal who have a recognizable style of play.

2. Study their team play and break it down into the general elements of their play. For example look for these aspects:

When in possession: How do they keep possession? When do they play long and when do they work through the thirds? How do they go forward? How do they utilize space at the back, in midfield, up front and in wide positions? How do they work in the top third to create finishing opportunities? How clinical and sophisticated is their finishing in the air and on the ground?

When out of possession: How do they win the ball back both as individuals and as group of players? What parts of the field do they pressurize the ball? Do they maximize attacking opportunities on regaining possession?

Set Plays: How effective are they with attacking set plays? How do they defend against opposition set plays?

From this research the coach can select and prioritize the key elements they want in their playing philosophy/game style and put them in an order of priority. The breakdown of key elements could look like this:

Here we give example of the first stage. It is important to emphasize that the philosophy/game style is unique to each coach. This is an example of one coaches planning:

General Components

1. 1. *Govern the Ball: A team understanding of how to create and use space to keep the ball. To know and understand when to exploit playing long and when to exploit playing through the thirds*
2. 2. *Going Forward With Certainty: A team Understanding of how to attack with cleverness whilst maintaining possession and achieving good possession in dangerous areas.*
3. 3. *Create Clever Finishing Opportunities. Creating and achieving various finishing opportunities in and around the box. "Playing in areas" "2nd six yard box" "2nd Penalty Area" "POMO Situations".*
4. 4. *Maximizing Finishing: Hitting the stanchions, 2 score easier than 1, following up deflections and rebounds, quality heading, volleying and curling shots.*
5. 5. *Defending aggressively: Attacking the opposition's possession and winning the ball back in a quick clean and aggressive manner as individuals and as a team.*
6. 6. *Maximizing possession and finishing opportunities on attacking set plays, corners, free kicks and, throw ins.*
7. 7. *Minimizing possession and finishing opportunities for the opposition on their set plays, Corners, free kicks and throw ins.*
8. 8. *Team mobility when in possession players moving and creating support positions defensive shape going narrow, squeezing /dropping in unison. Controlling opposition movement*

[The Secret of Planning – part 2](#)

Posted March 24, 2010 by Admin in [Coach Education](#), [Player Development](#). Tagged: [planning](#), [Roger Wilkinson](#), [season](#). [Leave a Comment](#)

The Secret of Planning – Part 2.

By Roger Wilkinson

Planning Step 2 – Tactical and Technical Breakdown

The coach should now take each component of the game style and break it down into the tactical and skill details needed to make each component of the game style work. The coach breaks down each element to identify the TACTICAL PRINCIPLES.

In breaking down the element, Keeping Possession the coach might consider some of the following: Support play, mobility, creating space, when to pass or run forwards with the ball, when to go sideways and when to go backwards, when and how to go long, when to play shorter – through the thirds.

Having established the tactical principles needed to make the general elements happen the coach now identifies the skills needed to enable the players to operate successfully in their tactical blue print.

For example, with Keeping Possession the key skills the coach wants to develop might be; Running and turning with the ball, beating opponents, passing long and short, receiving balls in the air and on the ground, wall passing and take over's, quick feet, body shapes, and "playing with your eyes up" .

So the breakdown of the technical and tactical/skill elements could look like this.

| Component | Technical Elements | Tactical/Skill Elements |
|---|---|--|
| Govern the Ball. A team understanding of how to create and use space to keep the ball. To know and understand when to exploit playing long and when to exploit playing through the thirds. | When and how to play round. Creating overloads. Recognising running in opportunities. Starting again. Benchmark football (playing long and ring fencing the ball and opponents). Running across defenders. | Running with the ball with both feet. Turning, screening and tricks. Takeovers and wall passes. Support play. Soft passing. Touch-move. Long passing. |
| Going Forward With Certainty. A team understanding of how to attack with cleverness whilst maintaining possession and achieving good possession in dangerous areas. | Playing from the back into midfield. Midfield play rounds. Creating playing and running in opportunities. Playing across the field to play through the field. Start agains. Counter attack. Half positions. | Running through space with both feet. Passing with the inside and outside of both feet. Turning, tricks, wall passes. "Opening the curtain", body position – shoulders, 1st run-2nd run. Open and closed turns. Passing on the floor and in air. |
| Create Clever Finishing Opportunities. Creating and achieving various finishing opportunities in and around the box. Playing in areas, 2nd six yard box, 2nd penalty Area, POMO situations” | Playing and running-in areas on the sides of the box. Creating opportunities on the edge of box. Playing and running into the box from wide positions. Creating crossing opportunities. Half positions | Playing in balls. Disguise passing. Runs and tricks to get into the box. Feinting set ups to shoot. Crossing to near, far and 2nd six yard box. Pull backs from the touch-line. |
| Maximizing Finishing. Hitting the stanchions, 2 score easier than 1, following in for deflections and rebounds, quality heading, volleying and curling shots. | Scoring runs and 3rd man runs. Working offside trap. Mobility and inter change. Dropping out. Using space. | Power Striking. Wrapping toe round the ball. Accurate finishing. 2 men striking. Rebounding. Near post deflections. Heading far post and central headers. |
| Defending aggressively. Attacking the opposition`s possession and winning the ball back in a quick clean and aggressive manner as | Closing down as individual and as a group. Staying in the pack. Depth and support in defence. Double teaming when pressurizing. Recovery runs | Closing down. Feet and body positions and distances. Support positions. Talking. Tackling with the front foot, blocking, mirroring. Heading. |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| individuals and as a team. | and positioning. Keeping the play in front. Pressure every move. Communication | Tracking and marking. Distances – space and man. Pushing up as a team. |
| Maximizing possession and finishing opportunities on attacking set plays, corners, free kicks and throw ons. | Throw ons. Corners. Back third free kicks, middle third free kicks and front third free kicks. Goal kicks. Creating space for effective delivery. | Set play delivery – excellence of delivery. Timing of runs. Disguise and tricks. |
| Minimizing possession and finishing opportunities for the opposition on their set plays, corners, free kicks and throw ons. | Blocking and sealing off key space and players. Mental Concentration and alertness. Effective walls and blocking. “know your job” | Blocking and marking. Distances. Tracking. Heading. Alertness. |
| Team mobility. Players moving and creating support positions when in possession. Defensive shape – going narrow, squeezing and dropping in unison. Controlling opposition movement. | Team shape. Stay in the pack. 30m rule Fluid reaction to situations. Make the field when big attacking and compact defending. Transition periods. | Getting the attackers head down on ball. Angle off each other. Fluid and quick reactions to movement of ball. High tempo. |

Planning step 3 – Season Planning:

“Fail to plan, plan to fail”

The coach having identified and prioritized their game style, tactics and skills must now organize their season coaching plan in order to coach the team to play in the style they wish. The key to this planning is for the coach to systematically ensure that the tactical and skill fundamentals are developed and coached to the team in a logical and easy to learn manner and that the team are also mentally and physically prepared. Most coaches break down the season into phases that look like this:

Pre Season

Early Season

Mid Season

Late Season

Post Season

Pre Season- This is where the players come in for preparatory training and coaching this period is usually 5 to 7 weeks before the competition starts. Here the coach is establishing the base for the season by making sure the players fully understand and can operate within the Game style.

- (a) The general elements
- (b) The tactical requirements
- (c) The skills needed

The coach also prepares the players physically to enable them to have the stamina, endurance, speed, strength and mobility to play this way for 90 minutes.

The coach must not forget the mental aspects of team play and in pre season establishes the morale, rules and expectancy of the players interacting as a group on and off the pitch

Early Season- This is the first third of the competitive season. The coach will still be assessing the players measured against the Game style.

It must be said here, that the coach at all phases of the season must be aware of the general club and league administration requirements. As part of their planning the coach should appoint competent back up staff to ensure the team is administered efficiently.

Some of the work will be re-establishing tactics and skills that have not been properly bedded down in pre season; the rest of the work will be further developing the Game style blueprint.

Success will be measured in different ways depending on whether the coach is a development coach where player development is more important than results (although results are all important and impact on the confidence of the players) or a senior first team coach where results are all important (but where winning without style is still a negative)

The coach will also be ensuring the players are maintaining and increasing their physical capabilities according to their strengths and weaknesses and the requirements of the game.

The coach should be giving regular feedback to players on their physical performance.

Regarding physical training for younger players, it is usually assumed that up to ages 12-14 if the practical playing sessions are sufficiently realistic and well planned then no extra physical work should be necessary.

The coach will also be working on the individual psychological requirements of their players in relation to their individual performances and their role in the team on and off the pitch.

The importance of the coach in relation to motivating the player and helping the players motivate themselves should not be under estimated. Regular feedback to the players in this aspect is vital.

The coach should always be checking with his assistants to ensure the administration and organization of the team is as efficient as it can be. Even at grassroots junior level a team that is well-organized saves coaches and managers from unnecessarily wasting time and resources.

Mid Season- This is the middle third of the competitive season. This is the make or break time for the team and the coach. This is where; if the blueprint is right the team will be playing according to the vision of the coach and putting on the performances.

Once again the coach will be adjusting and improving the style of the play of the team whilst looking to further extend the player capabilities both tactically and skilfully.

It is useful here (and in fact at any stage in the season) to get a colleague or friend to do a scouting report on the team to give feedback to the coach in order to give a fresh perspective.

The coach`s Game style breakdown will always be first point of reference for assessment of the players tactical and skill match day performance.

Physically the coach will probably breakdown this phase into 2 parts. In the first 2/3rds of mid-season the coach will maintain the intensity of the physical work the players require to produce top class performance.

In the last 3rd of this period the coach will change his/her focus on to maintaining the fitness base established in the players to keep them fresh and avoid burn out. So during the mid-season phase coaches will usually be required to improve and then maintain fitness.

Psychologically, as always the coach should be giving individual feedback to the players to aid their improvement. The coach must always be monitoring the confidence of the player to provide feedback and support.

It is also important to maintain the team spirit to develop a strong work ethic, self-discipline and camaraderie amongst the players on and off the field. With younger players using the team to develop and support good values as well as teaching children how to relate with their peers and adults (the coach) is an important function of the coach.

Late Season –This is the last third of the competitive season.

It is in this phase that the coach must keep their work interesting and challenging. This is the “business end” of the season – where the team will be in one of the three situations.

- 1) Challenging for honours in the top third of the league.
- 2) Fighting to avoid finishing in the bottom 3 teams and may be relegated.
- 3) Mid table and needing to maintain playing momentum.

Whatever position the coach should constantly work to improve all facets of individual and team play to squeeze the full potential out of their players.

Sessions should be challenging, enjoyable BUT also realistic to the demands of the Game style blueprint.

The coaches previous work on the tactical and skill aspects and how successfully they have been established in the player will be crucial, whatever the league position, at this stage of the season.

Physiologically the coach is concerned with maintaining freshness in the players at this stage the majority of physical work will concern itself with speed and sharpness and avoiding burn out.

Psychologically the coach will need to work in different ways depending on which of the 3 league positions the team is in:

(a) If challenging for honours it is important the players do not get too excited or over motivated on match day but instead focus on doing their jobs and concentrate fully throughout the 90 mins. It is just as important to maintain this calm and concentrated approach in training.

(b) If the team is mid table then the coach might want to set specific targets for the players and the team, it might be worth introducing a reward system to make the end of the season more challenging for the players. The key in this situation is to create enthusiasm in the team to train and complete.

(c) If the team is at the bottom end of the league then the coach and the team are fighting to achieve a more respectable position. The players confidence will be paramount as, without doubt, they will be having doubts about their ability. Here it is important that the coach concentrates on the positives and not the negatives.

Post Season – It is important to close of the season effectively. First of all by individually giving feedback to players and assistants. Then by having a team meeting where the team can officially close the season with tributes and thanks being given and received and players being told about future playing opportunities.

Every season for the coach is a learning experience for the next season.

The post season for the coach is most important, it is a time to reflect on their game style, player selection, planning, coaching, team organization, team motivation, team fitness and general administration. To gain insights from the positive aspects of the season and to learn what to avoid from the negative aspects of the season.

Here is an example of pre Season planning in all aspects.

TECHNICAL/TACTICAL

Week 1: Govern the ball-Technical requirements running, passing, take-overs, screening, turning, and tricks. Tactical requirements in the back third, middle third, front third and whole

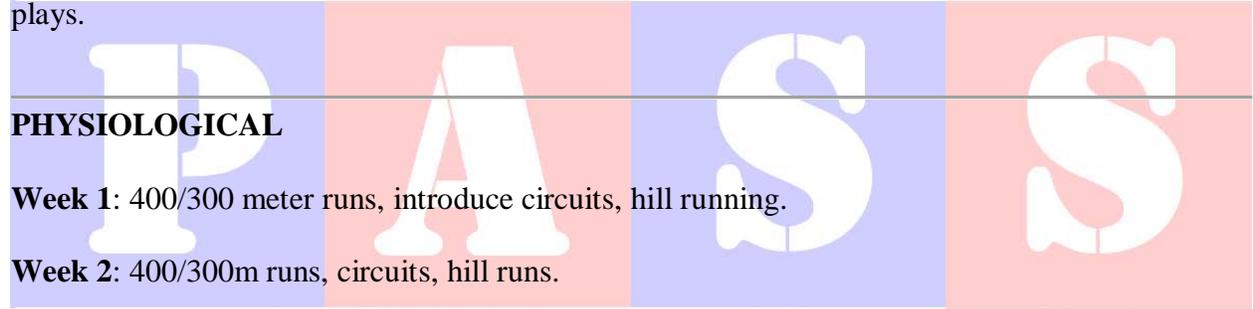
pitch tactical requirements. “The blue print” for playing through the thirds. Defensive basics to win and then play.

Week 2: Introduce rotation through the thirds, attacking and defending. Establish individual responsibilities throughout the Game style blueprint. Work on benchmark balls. Establish defensive support play. Introduce set plays.

Week 3: Work on going forward and retaining possession. Runs with and without the ball. When to play round, when to start again. Playing into space inside box -”playing in “. Working in front of and around the side of the penalty box. Work on general finishing. Set plays. Defensive closing down and support.

Week 4: Use a full pitch to work on defensive shape including individual responsibilities and group responsibilities. Full pitch on attacking shape, creating space, 1st and 2nd runs, cross field and diving in runs and spins. Set plays.

Week 5: Play games against overloaded teams. Change pitch shapes. Extend defensive responsibilities. Introduce high tempo play. Individual responsibilities within the game style. Set plays.



PHYSIOLOGICAL

Week 1: 400/300 meter runs, introduce circuits, hill running.

Week 2: 400/300m runs, circuits, hill runs.

Week 3: 300/200/100m runs, extended circuits, hill runs.

Week 4: 300/200/100m runs, extended circuits, hill runs.

Week 5: 100/70/50/20m runs, circuits.

PSYCHOLOGICAL/TEAM MORALE

Week 1: Team ethic, individual responsibilities, team morale and self-image.

Week 2: Team ethic, Individual responsibilities, team morale and self-image.

Week 3: Team and coach feedback, individual player and self assessment and group bonding.

Week 4: Team target setting, individual player target setting and group challenges

Week 5: When are we working as a group? When are we working as an individual? Identify future goals.

ADMINISTRATION/ORGANISATION

Week 1: Training times-Transport, equipment, storage, training kit, i.e. balls, bibs, cones and physio requirements

Week 2: Reference previous week. Pre season games organised.

Week 3: Training kit handed out to the squad. Pre season games organised. Check with physio re: injured players.

Week 4: Hand out fixture list for the season. Check league administration and physio report

Week 5: Ensure squad numbers are indexed for the league. Give out tickets and parking passes, physio report.

What do you want to achieve at the end of this period?

Team to be drilled and trained into their game requirements, including set plays. Team has achieved a high level of all round fitness. Team has a sense of self-image.

What have you achieved?

Team has 90% understanding of game style, fitness is good, team spirit developing.

Planning Step 4 – Session Planning

To initiate the session planning process the coach looks at the strategies, tactics and skills they have prioritized in the season planner.

All session`s should be following on from a previous session and be the preparation for the next session. Too often coaches put on a variety of sessions that have no “spine of development” linking one to the other because they have not developed a programme of work designed to produce a game style.

Session`s are often broken down in to 3 parts:

- (a) The group introductory session to develop the skills needed to make the theme of the session work.
- (b) The small area work that beds in the tactical ideas needed in the theme of the session.
- (c) The full game situation where the coach re-emphasises to the players the skills and tactics practiced in (a) and (b) to successfully perform as individuals and as a team in realistic game situations.

Therefore, (c) is where the coach assesses whether the players have taken on board their ideas and if they need more work or are ready to move on. This assessment will form the basis on which the coach will prepare the next session.

As the players become more proficient the coach may deliver sessions in 2 parts using (a) or (b) as the introductory session and then going into the game stage.

When planning a session start from the end session and work backwards -so:

1) Decide what you want to achieve technically and tactically in the full game situation in the game part of the session.

(2) Then plan the small area work to produce the tactical ability in the team to produce the desired result in the game.

(3) In the group session the coach identifies and works on the skills needed to make the tactical basis of the game style succeed.



Player's Academy of Soccer Skills