

PRINCIPLES OF AGE APPROPRIATE DEVELOPMENT TRAINING CHARACTERISTICS BASED ON HUMAN DEVELOPMENT

Initial Stage: (U6, U7, U8)

Very young players from 5 to 8 years of age love to play. Therefore, all practices should be based on fun games.

Players must spend the maximum time possible in contact with the ball and experiment by themselves.

For the first time, the player has to build relationships with other players. To develop a sense of teamwork, assign different responsibilities to the players.

Basic motor skills like walking, running, or jumping must be combined with ball handling and control.

Basic Stage: (U9, U10, U11, U12)

Pre-pubescent players from ages 9 to 12 have a special ability to learn. Therefore, this is the right age to work on specific soccer techniques and skills. Developing good technique is essential at this age.

1v1 and 2v1 attacking and defending situations are important for developing individual skills and passing techniques necessary for developing the team game.

Use small-sided games to develop basic attacking and defensive principles. Other important aspects of tactical training are possession, combination play, transition, finishing in the final third, and zonal defending. Players will rotate in two or three different positions to avoid early specialization.

Speed, coordination, balance and agility are the main physical aspects to improve at this stage.

Intermediate Stage: (U13, U14)

Training sessions are orientated more toward tactics at this stage, and the player will practice in bigger spaces. Players must practice all different types of techniques.

Strength and endurance should be part of the fitness training. Coaching methods must consider and preserve players' health since they will be experiencing many changes due to puberty at this stage. Warm-ups and cool-downs are essential, as is dynamic flexibility.

At this stage, players must develop discipline by following the coach's instructions during and outside training sessions.

Advanced: U15, U16, U17, U18

Tactical training and small-sided games are essential at this stage. Attacking and defending principles must be part of all games. Important aspects of tactical training are speed of play, quick transitions, counterattacking, finishing in the final third, and pressing.

The technique will focus on speed and accuracy. Passing and finishing are two of the main techniques emphasized at this stage. Part of the technical training will be position-specific (e.g., defenders: passing, center midfield players: receiving to turn, and strikers: finishing).

The physical aspect of the game is key at this stage: endurance, strength, and speed will be part of the weekly training routine.

Players should be expected to show commitment to the team, concentration in training sessions, and competitiveness during the game.

Specific: U19, U20

All tactical aspects of the game must be covered. Strategy and set pieces are now a major part of the training sessions.

The technical and physical work is based on explosive actions.

Performance: Senior

Training methods will be adapted to the type of players and level of competition.