

CURRICULUM TRAINING

FOR THE **1-4-3-3**

SESSIONS FOR 9v9

by ROBERT PODEYN



Curriculum Training For the 1-4-3-3 9v9

By

Robert Podeyn

Published by

WORLD CLASS COACHING

First published June 2021 by

WORLD CLASS COACHING 4015 N 78th Street #120, Scottsdale, AZ 85251

Copyright © WORLD CLASS COACHING 2021

All rights reserved. No parts of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise, without prior written permission of the publisher.

Authors – Robert Podeyn

Editor - Mike Saif

Cover Art By - Barrie Smith

Table of Contents

About the Author	3-4
Thank You.....	5-6
Introduction to the Series	7-27
Introduction to the Curriculum Guide for 7v7	8-11
Introduction to the Curriculum Guide for 9v9	11-16
Introduction to the Curriculum Guide for 11v11 (Part I)	16-21
Introduction to the Curriculum Guide for 11v11 (Part II)	21-24
The Technical Director	24-27
Club Structure	28-30
Under 11 Age Level Program	31-47
Homework and Pre-Training Activities	32-33
Technical Development	34-38
Tactical Development	39-44
Psychological Development	45-46
Physiological Development.....	47
Under 12 Age Level Program	48-70
Homework and Pre-Training Activities	49-50
Technical Development	51-56
Tactical Development	57-67
Psychological Development	68-69
Physiological Development.....	70
Periodization for 9v9 Development	71-73
Summary	74
Planning Forms and Evaluations	75-85

ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Robert Podeyn began as a soccer player in New York playing club soccer for Kings Park Soccer Club and Cow Harbor Soccer Club in the 1970s and 1980s. He then played for LIU- C.W. Post College and helped them advance to the NCAA Division II Quarterfinals in 1987, earning All-Conference and Honorable Mention All-American Honors. That same year he found himself playing his fourth year of semi-professional soccer in the now defunct American Soccer League where he set a professional record of 973 shutout minutes en-route to a US Open Finals appearance by his team, the Long Island Stars, against the heavily favored Brooklyn Cosmos. An 18 save performance was not enough as his team lost a 1-0 decision in double overtime, but it did earn him team and league MVP Honors in the 1987-1988 Season. His professional career ended in 1990 after seven seasons, three team MVP's and two league MVP's.

As a coach, he began with the very club he started with as a player, Kings Park Soccer Club, in 1982. He continued coaching youth, junior high school and high school soccer in New York until he was married and moved to Florida in 1990. He became the head girls' varsity soccer coach at Osceola High School in 1990 and quickly helped that team rise from 3 wins to 17 wins in three years and a #8 ranking in the Class AAAA State Rankings. He moved to the boys program and helped them establish their first winning record in 1996 and a brief State Ranking at #10 in late December 1995. His high school coaching record stands at 126-71-14. He then moved to the college coaching ranks in 2003 and has worked there ever since. In 2003, he began his collegiate coaching career at William Woods University and re-built that program into one of the top offensive programs in the country with 183 goals scored in 57 games. He then moved on to Northwood University in Texas and took them from a program on the brink of extinction to a team threatening to enter the NAIA Top 25 and known for its offensive abilities scoring 147 goals in just 55 games. Northwood set numerous records for wins (13), consecutive wins (9), shutouts (9), consecutive shutouts (7), and consecutive games played without being shutout (21). From Northwood University in Texas he moved into the NCAA Division II ranks and Southwest Baptist University in Missouri where he again rebuilt another program into a competitive power. He took a program riddled with drama issues and problems and built it into a Top 25 Team that qualified for the National Tournament two years in a row becoming the All-

Time Winningest Coach in program history. He then moved to California where he took on another challenge at Fresno Pacific University. Even though the program had only experienced 4 winning seasons in 15 years and was less-funded than most of the teams in the conference he has produced 4 winning seasons in six years and is on the brink of returning to the National Tournament. He was recognized as the Conference Coach of the Year in 2017, his 4th recognition as a College Coach in his 16 years of coaching. He has over 155 career wins and over 95 conference wins as a college coach.

As a club coach, Podeyn has served as a Technical Director, Director of Coaching, or Assistant Director six times in four different states spanning over 35 years of coaching. He has worked at startup clubs with less than 150 players and expansive clubs with more than 5000 youth players (recreational to competitive). He has served as an educator, clinician, and mentor to many clubs, administrators, and coaches resulting in more than two dozen former players, assistants, and coaches pursuing careers in the field of coaching.

Coach Podeyn advanced through the USSF Licenses beginning in 1992 with the 'F' License Course. He has taken every course and currently holds his USSF National 'A' License, having never failed any course or any portion of any course. He has also taken NSCAA Courses (now USC) from State Diploma through to the National Goalkeeping Diploma and the National Youth Diploma, all earned with Distinction. He has obtained his NSCAA Premier Diploma as the Top License available in the NSCAA (USC). He has ventured overseas to complete every level of the English Football Association Courses from Team Leaders Badge through to the Coaching License and UEFA Coaching Certificate and UEFA 'B' License upgrade. He has also earned his Advanced Tactics Diploma through the KNVB and attended the basic instructional courses of the KNVB TC3 Coaching Course. He has traveled to Brazil where he observed and participated in sessions with the CBF and CAM, been to Italy where he worked with famed Italian development coach and national youth director at Fiorentina, Professor Vincenzo Vergine. His other experiences include working with Dutch Clubs AFC Ajax and Vitesse Arnhem; both of the Dutch Eredivisie. He has written over a dozen articles and published six books and eight journals on his experiences coaching on this planet.

THANK YOU

As always, without the support and trust of my players I wouldn't be the coach that I am. They believe in me and my unique way of doing things. I believe in them and their devotion to the game of soccer. Equally as important is the love and support I receive from my family. They have endured so much through my love and passion for this game. The endless hours I've spent and will spend on soccer fields around the world to learn as much as I can, the uprooting of my family to follow better and brighter opportunities in this gypsy-like profession, and the many hours spent on the phone or in front of a computer writing or recruiting. They believe in me and it is with their love and support that I keep pushing myself to be better.

To my mom who always supported and guided me through my early days in playing the game and later in life as I grew into a man with a beautiful family with a wonderful wife and two great kids. Every step has been a struggle and a battle to get better, earn respect and improve every facet of my life. Thank you for being the best mother anyone could ever have.

In addition to my family and the many players who have played for me, I must recognize a few others who have guided me lately and helped in the production of this latest book.

- 1) **Former Assistant Coaches and Players-** I know I mentioned them in general above, but there are a few that I always think of and drive me to continue doing what I do. I just came from the convention a month ago and ran into several of my former players who are now coaches. You don't realize the impact you have as a coach until you have someone sit down in front of you and tell you that you are the reason they are coaching and that you inspired them to become a college coach. Part of that moment is overwhelming as you think back to when that person played for you and you wish you could've been better for them and part of you starts to understand the awesome responsibility you have as a coach and what that impact has meant to others. Thank you to those that have followed careers in coaching that have either played for me or coached with me. I just hope my impact was a positive one.
- 2) **Terry Mowle-** He should be in every book I write (and is) as his hands and mind have guided me more than any other. Even though you have left this world for a better one your presence is still with me and your influence is stronger more today than it ever has been. Who would have thought an act of kindness on your part being rudely rejected by Osceola Youth Soccer would have blossomed into the friendship we shared and the knowledge you gave me. I've learned so much from you but, more importantly, you helped me to think about the game and to never stop wanting to learn.
- 3) **Current and Former Clubs and Administrators-** The experience of letting me do what I do has been a humbling and learning experience for me. Thank you for giving me room to grow and for understanding when I have made mistakes. My passion and goals have

always been with the best of intentions and I value every experience I have had. Every stop is an indelible mark in my memory bank.

I know there are many others, and I apologize for not recognizing everyone. I felt it was important to mention these few at this particular time in my life. Others have been significant in my professional growth. For those not listed, you are remembered and respected and I value the contributions you have made in my life as a professional. To the coaches out there reading this book; thank you for the opportunity to share my thoughts and passions with you. I hope this book helps you in some way to grow and develop your soccer intelligence. Remember, always look for opportunities to learn and improve. Good luck in your pursuit of your passion as a soccer coach.

INTRODUCTION TO THE SERIES

This Curriculum Guide Series is meant for someone who is responsible for overseeing the immediate and ongoing training and development of teams within an age grouping or for an entire sequence of ages for a youth club at any level. This could be a Technical Director of a club who oversees the complete development of the player from their starting age until completion. It could be a Director who is in charge of a group of ages (i.e. focuses on 7v7 training only, focuses on girls only, focuses on advanced or college prep ages, etc.). It could simply be a coach who is responsible for the development of players at specific ages. This series is meant to focus on the development of the player from their starting age of competitive soccer where players typically begin working in a 7v7 environment (Under 9) until the conclusion of their youth development where players are in their preparation for college working in an 11v11 format (Under 19). Additionally, this series focuses on educating and developing players within the 1-4-3-3 Formation. From 7v7 up to 11v11 the focus of development on a technical, tactical, psychological, and physiological level is on this system of play. In developing players, it is important that four areas are addressed:

- **Consistency-** There is always an argument as to whether it is important to teach one formation within a club from top to bottom. There is never a right way or wrong way of doing things when it comes to development as different methods work in different situations. For the purposes of this series I will point out the advantages of staying with one formation from start to finish in your development cycle. The first advantage is consistency. Your development from one year to the next and when advancing from 7v7 to 9v9 to 11v11 is more consistent. Players will have a better understanding of how things connect as you move from year-to-year and formation-to-formation. It also helps your coaches in their understanding of how to develop players as there is an emphasis and a plan in the development of the player. They won't feel as isolated and will feel that with everyone following the same model it becomes easier to work together as a staff.
- **Focus-** Players and coaches will tend to be more focused in their development and the delivery methods when following the same methodology. Players will understand that the teams above them and the teams below them are training a developing the exact same way. It also helps to challenge players as they start to think formationally when training and when playing and competing.
- **Structure-** Having a structure and a plan that is followed from the youngest ages to the oldest ages makes it easier to track development and player growth. It is also easier to work on coaching education and development as everyone is following the same philosophy and methodology. This is an important aspect as the competitive player

tends to like structure and develop quicker when there is a set plan from top to bottom. It is also something that parents tend to get behind as they see the structure and plan within the club and will buy-in to the overall development plan as everyone is following it. This will also happen as success is realized and teams begin to compete and win at different levels. Success breeds success is the old saying. As you implement a set structure and begin teaching it top-to-bottom, players and coaches will be more focused as there is a plan and methodology that everyone is followed. This will produce results which will create buy-in from everyone involved, especially the parents.

- **Content-** The three previous areas are meaningless if you don't have the actual content to follow. There must be substance to what you are doing. This is what this series will help with, providing you with the content to develop a plan to implement within your club. Content is critical and must be maintained and followed specifically. Content is the actual information and delivery of that information. The whole approach to teaching any formation can only be done with the right content, otherwise this approach is meaningless.

This series is separated into four books that cover this complete development cycle. Each book offers a comprehensive development plan for the player at every age from Under 9 all the way up to Under 19. Each book will cover important aspects of Technical Development, Tactical Development, Psychological Development, and Physiological Development. All aspects are looked at in each series and every book is examined for the Periodization of Training and Development at those ages.

- 1) **Curriculum Guide for 7v7-** This focuses on the beginning ages of competitive soccer (Under 9 and Under 10). This book looks at introducing the 1-4-3-3 Formation at the 7v7 format so that teams at these ages are playing either a 1-2-3-1 or 1-3-2-1 Formation. Players will start to examine the importance of layers within a formation as they have different lines within their formation.

- a. **Technical Development-** Coaches will introduce to the players how to perform different technical skills while also focusing on the three important parts of technique technique:

- i. **Preparation-** This is the ability of the player to prepare to have the ball. This would include how they are positioned to receive the ball, are they on the balls of their feet, are they ready to receive the ball properly, are their hips open to the field of play, are they surveying the area to anticipate where they should touch the ball as they receive it, etc. There are many aspects of preparation and is an important part of teaching technique to younger players.

- ii. **Skill-** There are a number of skills a soccer player must learn and be able to perform. These skills start with simple dribbling skills and progress to ball manipulation skills, possession skills, passing and receiving skills, ball striking skills for accuracy and power, 1v1 skills, attacking and defending skills, etc. It is important at the younger ages that we develop a strong technical foundation in order to create smarter and more capable players at the older ages.
 - iii. **Speed-** This is an important component of technique, especially as players get older and progress through the development plan. Technical Speed is the ability of the player to prepare and to perform the skill as quickly as possible. In some cases. This might refer to 1-touch play, but this is not an exclusive definition. It is important to understand that the true definition is how quickly you can perform the first two components of technique accurately and effectively. In some environments, 1-touch may not be an option. For example, if you are playing on a wet pitch it may not be possible to play 1-touch and maintain control of the ball or possession. It may require players to play a controlled 2-touch type of game that is of a more direct style. If you are playing on a very wide pitch it may be necessary to expand the field and play the ball from side-to-side forcing your opponent to run and chase while your team maintains possession and searches for opportunities to stretch your opponent and to penetrate behind or through them. It is also important to understand that speed is not an important focus of development at this stage, at least not early on. It is important that players gain confidence and trust in their touch before they move on to speed. Speed will come naturally as the level becomes more competitive and the level of play more advanced.
- b. Tactical Development-** The tactical development for players at this age begins with understanding spaces and areas. We call this Spatial Awareness. Players have to understand to spread out and to get wide and deep. This is where you begin with the tactical development of players at the youngest development ages. This will also transition into teaching the foundations of possession. Once a player has possession of the ball where should they look first. This is an important concept in the development of the player; teaching them how to possess and options in possession. This will also expand to teach the concepts of Support and Balance in possession. Players will also begin to learn how to create space. This would begin on an individual level as you teach players how they can create space for themselves in 1v1 situations. As they progress through this will

also expand to teach them how to create space for their supporting players. Fundamental learning will occur involving positional roles and responsibilities on a basic level to start to give them a foundation for later development. Players will also be exposed to formational roles and responsibilities and why they are playing the formation they are playing. What is good about this formation?

- c. **Psychological Development-** It is important to understand that players at the younger ages are there to have fun. The environment a coach creates needs to be a positive and supportive environment so that players enjoy coming to training, enjoy their teammates and have fun learning as players. The training style for the younger ages is what is called ***Directed Learning***. This means that the coach directs the environment and the training session and explains what the players are doing, what they are learning, and why. It is important that the coach directs the learning at these younger ages. The final piece is to make sure that the communication given to the players is simply and jargon-free. An 8 or 9 year-old player isn't going to understand complex theory. You must be very simple in your communication and in your explanations to the players at these ages.
- d. **Physiological Development-** These are younger players and making kids run or do fitness would be a waste of training time at these ages. Players at the younger ages will naturally develop their fitness for the games through training, small-sided play, and match-related training and situations. There is no need to introduce any type of fitness training or development program. Players at these younger ages will often lack some basic balance and coordination skills. It may be necessary to implement, as part of your training model, a routine that helps to develop the player's abilities for balance and natural coordinative skills.
- e. **Periodization-** This is an important aspect when dealing with player development. There are three cycles when developing a player at any level. The way you start to develop the overall training regiment is to first create the complete picture of what you want. Since we are focusing on the younger players in the 7v7 Book, it is important to create the image of what you want that player to look like at the end of their 2 years going through this part of the series. What type of technical player should they be? What should they understand tactically? What should this player understand psychologically? Where should they be in their physiological development? Create that picture with as much detail as possible, then you can start to look at Periodization and each of the three cycles.
 - i. **Macrocycle-** This is the largest of the three cycles. Since we are dealing with 7yv7 and this covers a 2-year development cycle, I look at the

Macrocycle as being 2 Complete Cycles. The first cycle would be year 1 (Under 9). What do they need to learn in that first year of development at 7v7? Be as complete as possible when creating this image. The second cycle would be year 2 (Under 10). What do they need to learn in that second year of development at 7v7? Be as complete as possible when creating this image. This is where you begin to create the image of what a player should look like as they go through your club.

- ii. **Mesocycle-** Once you've created your Macrocycle and you have the image of what a player should learn in each year, then you can divide each of those years into two parts. This would be your Mesocycles. There would be a total of 4 Complete Cycles. In year 1 you would have 2 separate cycles (Fall and Spring). This would be the same for year 2 (Fall and Spring). Again, it is important that you follow what you had on the previous cycle and be as complete as you can.
- iii. **Microcycle-** This is where you start breaking everything down to what should be covered week to week in the development of the player. You started by identifying where the player should be at the conclusion of their development. You then broke that down into two equal parts; Year 1 and Year 2. You broke that down even farther into Fall and Spring. Now you have to take that and break it down into week by week. This is a simple way of explaining and understanding what Periodization is when it comes to youth player development.

2) Curriculum Guide for 9v9- This formation advances the tactical side by focusing more on the triangle shape. This is the most important shape in the game of soccer as it creates natural lines of support and balance. This begins to advance the development of the player as it focuses on the Under 11 and Under 12 age levels as they step up to play a 1-3-2-3 Formation. Positional Training will start to develop more as two central midfielders are added to the equation. Players will start to get a better understanding of options in possession and will better understand how to possess the ball.

a. Technical Development- Coaches will continue to focus on how to perform different technical skills while also focusing on the three important parts of technique:

- i. **Preparation-** This is the ability of the player to prepare to have the ball. This would include how they are positioned to receive the ball, are they on the balls of their feet, are they ready to receive the ball properly, are their hips open to the field of play, are they surveying the area to anticipate where they should touch the ball as they receive it, etc. There

are many aspects of preparation and is an important part of teaching technique to younger players.

ii. **Skill-** There are a number of skills a soccer player must learn and be able to perform. These skills start with simple dribbling skills and progress to ball manipulation skills, possession skills, passing and receiving skills, ball striking skills for accuracy and power, 1v1 skills, attacking and defending skills, etc. It is important at the younger ages that we develop a strong technical foundation in order to create smarter and more capable players at the older ages.

iii. **Speed-** The first two years of development were focused on building technique and developing confidence. Speed was not a concern as it was more important to build a proper technical foundation. Now as you advance from 7v7 to 9v9 more of an emphasis will be placed on proper technique, but on now trying to perform it more quickly. It will begin with individual technical speed, but it will be important to start learning about positional and formational speed on a technical level. This would involve speed in possession, speed transition to attacking play and penetration, and learning how to dictate and control the pace of the game. The focus will still be on 2-touch play, but an introduction to proper technique using 1-touch play. The integration of speed is an important element to be implemented at this stage.

b. **Tactical Development-** The tactical development for players as they advance to 9v9 will start to focus on the understanding of the triangle shape. This will include the aspects of spatial awareness taught at the 7v7 levels but will now include width and depth at angles in possession. This formation builds to now include 3 attacking players. The attacking players will now start to work on stretching the defense by playing as wide as possible. The central attacker (#9) stays central but shifts ball side and looks to always open opportunities to receive the ball to feet. This starts to work on the players reading the game and adjusting and moving off the ball. The wide attackers are always looking to stay wide and as deep as possible. This gets them at an early age looking to read how to be on sides by looking across at the positioning of the last defender for the opposing team. Defensively, the #9 will work on forcing the ball to the side and then eliminating the central defender from getting the ball again. They will also look for opportunities to double-team the ball if the receiving player wide has a strong or indecisive touch. The wing attackers would work on forcing the ball inside and working to get compact quickly to force the opposing team to either play long or to play back. In the central midfield you will now have two players

instead of just one. Positional training will start to become more of a focus at this level as midfielders will start to learn about keeping their triangle shape with the #9. The ball side central midfielder will be taught to support directly underneath so that the #9 always has a visible support player. The weak side central midfielder will then be taught to shift up higher to be in a position to attack behind the defense while also reading if the #9 comes back too far into the midfield. If that happens the weak side central midfielder would then push up to become the #9. This will start to teach players that it is okay and even encouraged to shift and switch positions so that the formation stays balanced. The two midfielders will start to be taught to not be flat when playing. There should be one forward and one back in almost every situation so that you start to focus on the concept of depth, but positionally you are also starting to work with the roles of an attacking central midfielder and a defensive central midfielder. Defensively, the midfielders will work on denying central options. One would step forward to block the passing lane central. The second would drop in to protect the middle behind the first midfielder. Again, more of a focus on reading and adjusting to the game will start to be taught at this level. Three defenders will also be in the system and the concept of shifting and adjusting will start to be taught. In possession, the central defender will be slightly behind the two wing defenders in the system. The central defender will be given the responsibility of organizing and communicating. They will be taught how to organize and what type of communication should be given during the game. This same level of organization and communication will be taught equally to the goalkeeper as you want the information given to be consistent and accurate. The central defender in possession will look to play simple and make safe decisions that are low risk of losing possession. If the opportunity exists with space for the central defender to attack forward with possession, then they should be encouraged to do so. Once they start attracting pressure, though, they should release to a forward option and immediately retreat to their position to start organizing and communicating. Wing Defenders are trained to understand that they must shift up ball side to become the outside midfielders in possession. They are responsible for filling that space. If they do not, then the midfielders will be forced to come out wide exposing the middle of the field. That starts to break down the system and this is where formational roles and responsibilities come into play. Wing defenders are very much involved in the attack and must try to keep within 12-15 yards of the wing attacker to support them when they have the ball. The concept of shifting the defense will also be taught as the central defender will shadow towards ball side to support the wing

defender. The weak side will shift in towards the middle in front of the central defender. This way they are there to protect from a quick counter-attack to the opposing central attacker while also being in a position to quickly get wide to support the wing attacker when possession is switched from one side to the other. Defensively, the defense will work on keeping the opposing team wide. In the opponent's half of the field they are forced inside, but in your own half of the field the opponent is forced wide away from the middle where the goal is. Wing defenders act as the first line of confrontation as they are responsible for keeping the opposing player wide. The central defender supports them inside and from behind at a distance of 10-12 yards. The weak side defender shifts back underneath to act as the last defender and reads the runs of the opposing team. They must read whether there is a threat from the weak side and are in position to see what is happening. This means they drop underneath and position so they can see the field and potential runs coming from the weak side. The goalkeeper becomes more involved in possession as the team is taught to build out of the back. Since there is only one central defender, the goalkeeper must be comfortable playing with the ball at their feet as they act as the second central defender. They must make smart and safe decisions in possession and never get caught under pressure. In defense, they have their responsibilities, but their biggest responsibility is to organize and communicate.

- c. **Psychological Development-** It is important to understand that players at the younger ages are there to have fun, however, they will start to develop more of a competitive nature as they step up to 9v9. It is important to increase the level of information you are giving them, but to still keep it simple and to not overload them with too much information. The environment a coach creates needs to be a positive and supportive environment so that players enjoy coming to training, enjoy their teammates and have fun learning as players. The training style for the younger ages is what is called ***Directed Learning***. This means that the coach directs the environment and the training session and explains what the players are doing, what they are learning, and why. It is important that the coach directs the learning at these younger ages. The coach will also start to slowly involve the players in their decision-making encouraging them to problem-solve as they start to deal with more complex training. This type of training is called ***Discovery Learning***. The final piece is to make sure that the communication given to the players is simply and jargon-free.
- d. **Physiological Development-** These are younger players and making kids run or do fitness would be a waste of training time at these ages. Players at the younger ages will naturally develop their fitness for the games through training,

small-sided play, and match-related training and situations. There is no need to introduce any type of fitness training or development program. Players at these younger ages will often lack some basic balance and coordination skills. It may be necessary to implement, as part of your training model, a routine that helps to develop the player's abilities for balance and natural coordinative skills.

- e. **Periodization-** This is an important aspect when dealing with player development. There are three cycles when developing a player at any level. The way you start to develop the overall training regimen is to first create the complete picture of what you want. Since the training will start to be more complex at the 9v9 level, it is important to create the image of what you want that player to look like at the end of their 2 years going through this part of the series. What type of technical player should they be? What should they understand tactically? What should this player understand psychologically? Where should they be in their physiological development? Create that picture with as much detail as possible, then you can start to look at Periodization and each of the three cycles.
 - i. **Macrocycle-** This is the largest of the three cycles. Since we are dealing with 9v9 and this covers a 2-year development cycle, I look at the Macrocycle as being 2 Complete Cycles. The first cycle would be year 1 (Under 11). What do they need to learn in that first year of development at 9v9? Be as complete as possible when creating this image. The second cycle would be year 2 (Under 12). What do they need to learn in that second year of development at 9v9? Be as complete as possible when creating this image. This is where you begin to create the image of what a player should look like as they go through your club.
 - ii. **Mesocycle-** Once you've created your Macrocycle and you have the image of what a player should learn in each year, then you can divide each of those years into two parts. This would be your Mesocycles. There would be a total of 4 Complete Cycles. In year 1 you would have 2 separate cycles (Fall and Spring). This would be the same for year 2 (Fall and Spring). Again, it is important that you follow what you had on the previous cycle and be as complete as you can.
 - iii. **Microcycle-** This is where you start breaking everything down to what should be covered week to week in the development of the player. You started by identifying where the player should be at the conclusion of their development. You then broke that down into two equal parts; Year 1 and Year 2. You broke that down even farther into Fall and Spring. Now you have to take that and break it down into week by week. This is

a simple way of explaining and understanding what Periodization is when it comes to youth player development.

3) **Curriculum Guide for the 11v11 (Part I)**- This is the largest section in the series as it deals with four ages (Under 13 to Under 16) and involves building the foundations of the 1-4-3-3 Formation from beginner to intermediate levels. Everything has been building to this and there is a lot to focus on and teach. There are several aspects to consider as you make this jump with the first being the field. This will be the largest jump in terms of field size for the players. The field at 9v9 fluctuates slightly but is approximately 50 yards by 75 yards in size. Players will now have to adjust to a field that is approximately 70 yards by 120 yards. Players will have more than twice the square footage to cover in space from one year to the next. This will be a huge problem psychologically as players will see the field as being enormous compared to what they have been playing on. You will have to spend a lot of time early on re-focusing players on their spatial awareness. The system will now be complete at 11v11 and players will now have to adjust to the full system. The three forwards will have the least to adjust to in numbers but will still have to deal with spatial awareness issues. Attacking will still be the same as in the 9v9 for the forwards. Defending will be the same as well as the objective is to force the opposing team to play in their own half under pressure. The midfield will be the biggest area of training as you now have a natural triangle to work with. You can play the triangle with either one attacking and two holding, two attacking and one holding, or one true attacking and one true holding with one floating ball side. The important thing is to always keep the shape of the triangle. The concepts as taught at the 9v9 level are still the same, but it is important to continue to teach them as you progress through players development at the 11v11 level. The changes here will start to focus on the roles and responsibilities of the attacking midfielders versus the holding midfielders. Positioning will be a focus, shape will be important, and defensive shape will also be important. There will be a lot of instruction and focus early on as players adjust to the larger field and increased numbers.

a. **Technical Development**- Coaches will continue to focus on how to perform different technical skills while also focusing on the three important parts of technique:

i. **Preparation**- This is the ability of the player to prepare to have the ball. This would include how they are positioned to receive the ball, are they on the balls of their feet, are they ready to receive the ball properly, are their hips open to the field of play, are they surveying the area to anticipate where they should touch the ball as they receive it, etc. There are many aspects of preparation and is an important part of teaching

technique. The focus as the player starts to play on a bigger field and in a faster environment needs to be on the player keeping their head up to constantly survey and read the game. Players must always be reading and adjusting to the game and its changes.

- ii. **Skill-** There are a number of skills a soccer player must learn and be able to perform. At this stage a player should already have a solid technical foundation and the focus will be on polishing technique. The coach must be focused on correcting what I call technical laziness. A player will often become lazy in their technique because they are more comfortable with one foot. Incorporate the use of both feet equally as you train and force players to be proficient with both. Players must work on the strength of their touch adjusting to situations in training and games. Sometimes their touch needs to be soft and other times stronger. Their touch may need to be received with one surface of the foot to the side or to a different space where there is an opening.
 - iii. **Speed-** The first two years of development were focused on building technique and developing confidence. Speed was not a concern as it was more important to build a proper technical foundation. Now as you advance from 9v9 to 11v11 the focus needs to be on speed and accuracy in technique. This speed will now start to focus on positional technical requirements as technical speed for a central defender would be different than technical speed for the central attacker. Everything will start to incorporate 1-touch play, but with accuracy and execution of technique.
- b. Tactical Development-** The tactical development for players as they advance to 11v11 will be significant. There are many aspects that will be added as the players step up from 9v9 to 11v11. Initially, players will deal with spatial awareness again as the field is more than twice the space they are used to. The forwards will have the least adjustment when it comes to tactical awareness as there were three forwards at the 9v9 level. The focus in attack is the same as the players look to be as wide as possible to stretch out the opposing defense as much as possible creating 1v1s wide. The central attacker (#9) will have more space to deal with and working with them to make sure they stay in a central position will be the challenge. They will have more space to shift side-to-side, but they need to stay within the width of the 18-yard box so that they are always in position to attack the goal. The triangle midfield will have more to learn and focus on as there are now three players in the midfield instead of two. The ball side attacking central midfielder will always support the #9 directly underneath.

The weak side attacking central midfielder will always start shifting up looking for an opportunity to attack the space behind the opposing central defenders. The holding midfielder is the linking player and is responsible for keeping the shape of the triangle midfield. They are the voice in the triangle and are always looking to talk and communicate to the other two midfielders. As you progress through this level the triangle midfield will start to focus on switching and rotating in their movement off of the ball and in possession to create space. As they are playing they will find teams trying to negate their triangle by marking them man-to-man, or by trying to restrict their space by congesting the space. To combat this the triangle midfield will need to work on movement. This will start as simple as the two attacking central midfielders switching places during the run of play and as play is unfolding. The simple act of the two players switching will open up each player as they are moving into their new space. As you advance through this level the movement will become more developed and more complex. For example, when building out of the back the triangle midfield will rotate in the direction of possession. As the players are in the act of rotating all three players become open to receive the ball. The question then becomes a technical one with can the player time their pass properly, can they lead the player as they are moving into space, and can they properly weight the pass so that they don't under-play or over-play the pass. The key with movement is that you move with a purpose, you don't just move to move because then the movement becomes unproductive. Defensively, the triangle is very important. The strongest players for any team will always be the central players (either central midfielders or central attackers). It is important to work on denying possession or options into these central players. I always use a phrase where we 'keep a tip on the ball'. What this means is that we always have one of the triangle midfielders in a position to block the passing lane into the central part of the field. The other two midfielders work on keeping the shape of the triangle behind the tip. The entire triangle plays a zonal man-to-man defense. This means we start by getting a tip. The other two midfielders get their triangle shape behind the tip, but they are aware of opposing players trying to play on the fringes of the triangle. It may be necessary in certain situations for one of the supporting triangle midfield players to step and mark a player who is just outside of their area, but in a position to hurt them going forward. In the defense you are incorporating the second central defender. You now will start to use a checkmark shape, or as I like to call it a triangle and one shape in the defense. The central defenders work on supporting each other by dropping underneath the other when that player has possession. If there is space for a

central defender in possession to advance forward, they should always take advantage of that as it will draw an opposing player out of position and create opportunities for other players to go forward. The two central defenders early in their training should be working on shifting under each other to support the player with the ball. They will still keep their width in possession, but the player without the ball should always drop back so they can see the field and be available as an option in possession if the other central defender needs to switch sides. Wing defenders will focus on some of the same concepts in possession as were introduced at the 9v9 level. They should be encouraged to go forward and support the wing attacker on their side. They should also be encouraged to look for opportunities to overlap and underlap the wing attacker by reading the visual cues in the game. Everything in the defensive back four has depth and they should never be caught flat as that is the easiest type of defense to beat. Defensively, the four players should work on what is called the checkmark shape or triangle and one. The ball side wing defender looks to press and keep the opposing player wide (when in your own half of the field). The ball side central defender supports the wing defender and is 10-12 yards behind and inside at an angle towards the middle. The weak side central defender is then behind that central defender by about 10-12 yards and inside at an angle towards the middle. The weak side wing defender steps up in front of the weak side central defender and is 10-12 yards in front and wider forming a check mark shape or triangle and one shape. Defenders will also work on shifting and switching positions. For example, if the wing defender is beaten by a fast player down the line the supporting central defender would slide out to cover while the wing defender would shift in towards the middle looking to recover. The weak side central defender remains central surveying the opposing team and acting as the sweeper communicating with all defenders.

- c. **Psychological Development-** The first challenge in this area is dealing with how players adjust to a field that is more than twice the real estate from what they are used to. I would suggest in the Spring before they advance to 11v11 start to introduce the players to the 11v11 game through training and maybe a couple of tournaments. This will help in their adjustment when they are here fulltime. The job of the coach is really important in this transition as this is the level where more players quit playing than at any other time in their development. Training needs to start switching from **Directed Learning** where the coach tells the players what to do and why, to more of **Discovery Learning** where players are encouraged to problem-solve. Keep the environment positive and start giving the players more feedback about their performance and what they can do to be

better. This may include Player Evaluations. Be careful, though, as evaluations need to be based upon development and improvement and players and parents will get caught up in the negatives. Use it as a positive as far as they are doing these things well and this is where I see you needing to focus your development the next 3, 6, or 12 months. It is okay to have standards and to start asking more of players just do it in a firm way where players don't feel you are upset, frustrated, or mad at them. Players want to make a coach happy, but they also have mom and dad whispering in their ear and you need to be as supportive as possible with every player. I would also encourage you as a Director to refrain from the concept of teams having STARTERS. This can be destructive to teams as players that are not in this category will feel less valued and will lose confidence. Remember, development is the key in youth soccer and this should be the focus. There will naturally be some players who play more than others. As much as possible try to incorporate everyone into competition and stay away from using phrases with players like STARTERS.

- d. **Physiological Development-** There is still no real reason to focus on fitness, but with the increased level of play and higher level of competition it may be necessary to incorporate sessions that are more demanding. If you can always incorporate a ball into any increased demand of a fitness nature it will always be more beneficial. Also, refrain from looking at fitness as a punishment for performance or effort. You have such little time with players that it doesn't make sense to have them running or sprinting when you could be working in a similar way with a ball.
- e. **Periodization-** This is an important aspect when dealing with player development. There are three cycles when developing a player at any level. The way you start to develop the overall training regimen is to first create the complete picture of what you want. Since the training will enter its most complex phase at the 11v11 level, it is important to create the image of what you want that player to look like at the end of their 4 years going through this part of the series. What type of technical player should they be? What should they understand tactically? What should this player understand psychologically? Where should they be in their physiological development? Create that picture with as much detail as possible, then you can start to look at Periodization and each of the three cycles.
 - i. **Macrocycle-** This is the largest of the three cycles. Since we are dealing with 11v11 and this covers a 4-year development cycle, I look at the Macrocycle as being 4 Complete Cycles. The first cycle would be year 1 (Under 13). What do they need to learn in that first year of development

at 11v11? Be as complete as possible when creating this image. The second cycle would be year 2 (Under 14). What do they need to learn in that second year of development at 11v11? Be as complete as possible when creating this image. The third cycle would be year 3 (Under 15). What do they need to learn in that third year of development at 11v11? Be as complete as possible when creating this image. The fourth and final cycle would be year 4 (Under 16). What do they need to learn in that fourth year of development at 11v11? Be as complete as possible when creating this image. This is where you begin to create the image of what a player should look like as they go through your club.

- ii. **Mesocycle-** Once you've created your Macrocycle and you have the image of what a player should learn in each year, then you can divide each of those years into two parts. This would be your Mesocycles. There would be a total of 8 Complete Cycles. In year 1 you would have 2 separate cycles (Fall and Spring). This would be the same for year 2, year 3, and year 4 (Fall and Spring). Again, it is important that you follow what you had on the previous cycle and be as complete as you can.
- iii. **Microcycle-** This is where you start breaking everything down to what should be covered week to week in the development of the player. You started by identifying where the player should be at the conclusion of their development. You then broke that down into four equal parts; Year 1, Year 2, Year 3, and Year 4. You broke that down even farther into Fall and Spring for each of the four years. Now you have to take that and break it down into week by week. This is a simple way of explaining and understanding what Periodization is when it comes to youth player development.

4) Curriculum Guide for the 11v11 (Part II)- This is the final section in the series and focuses on fine tuning the 1-4-3-3 while also preparing the players for the next level (college and beyond). The age levels focused on here are Under 17 and Under 19. Everything is about performing the tasks with an accuracy and attention to perfection in play. The environment created should start to simulate as much as possible a college environment starting with training sessions. Training sessions will focus more on positional and formational training while being more focused and attentive to details in every aspect you train in. Players will also be exposed to training that focuses on the strengths and weaknesses of different systems of play and how to break down different systems. Training will mimic how to play against different formations and how to exploit the weaknesses in those systems. This level is more advanced and more

complex in training than at any other level and is designed to create players that are ready to train and perform right away at the college level.

- a. Technical Development-** Preparation and skill should already be established and players should already have a strong technical base. The focus at this level is on technical speed. Players need to work on performing technique quickly and should always be focused on protecting the ball.
 - i. Preparation-** This is the ability of the player to prepare to have the ball. This would include how they are positioned to receive the ball, are they on the balls of their feet, are they ready to receive the ball properly, are their hips open to the field of play, are they surveying the area to anticipate where they should touch the ball as they receive it, etc. There are many aspects of preparation and is an important part of teaching technique. The focus as the player starts to play on a bigger field and in a faster environment needs to be on the player keeping their head up to constantly survey and read the game. Players must always be reading and adjusting to the game and its changes.
 - ii. Skill-** There are a number of skills a soccer player must learn and be able to perform. At this stage a player should already have a solid technical foundation and the focus will be on polishing technique. The coach must be focused on correcting what I call technical laziness. A player will often become lazy in their technique because they are more comfortable with one foot. Incorporate the use of both feet equally as you train and force players to be proficient with both. Players must work on the strength of their touch adjusting to situations in training and games. Sometimes their touch needs to be soft and other times stronger. Their touch may need to be received with one surface of the foot to the side or to a different space where there is an opening.
 - iii. Speed-** This is the focus at this level. Players need to perform technical tasks quickly, accurately, and within the role of their position on the field.
- b. Tactical Development-** The tactical development for players in this final section is to prepare them for the next level. This focuses on a continuation of the roles and responsibilities of every player within the 1-4-3-3 System. In addition, players will learn the strengths and weaknesses of how to play in and against other formations, how to break down those formations, and how to overcome the obstacles within the 1-4-3-3. This section will be a very analytical one with players participating in sessions that are more challenging psychologically. There are many aspects that will be added as the players prepare for play at the next level. The forwards will be encouraged to attack and to play with urgency. We

want to see attacking players be hungry and aggressive around the goal always looking to shoot and score. The focus in attack is the same as the players look to be as wide as possible to stretch out the opposing defense as much as possible creating 1v1s wide. Quick combination play will also be a focus in the attack to create options to get behind the opposing defense. The central attacker (#9) will look to work in tight spaces while always having their back to goal. The #9 will have less time with possession and will always have a player on their back. They should look to bring the attacking midfielders into the play through combinations and 1-touch passing. The triangle midfield will continue their development as they focus on dominating and controlling the midfield in every game they play. The triangle midfield is the engine of the system. If it works well, you will dominate and win. If it doesn't work well, then you will lose. The importance in training needs to be on coordination, communication, and chemistry.

- c. **Psychological Development-** This section will have the most impact during this series. Players will be conditioned to constantly read and evaluate the game while also becoming more of a student of the game. The delivery method should mostly be through *Discovery Learning*. Players will be subjected to sessions where they must always be looking to problem-solve. They will be put into situations where they will deal with numbers up and numbers down, how to deal with pressure and aggressive play, and more elements of the physical game. All of these are areas that will impact the players in a psychological way.
- d. **Physiological Development-** Aspects of the college game will be brought in to start teaching and preparing players for the next level. The college game requires a higher level of fitness, is faster, demands a higher work rate, and is more aggressive and physical. Many of these are part of Psychological Development, but fitness is a big component of playing faster, being more aggressive, being more physical, and developing a more consistent game at a higher level. Training and match play will demand more speed and a higher work rate. Fitness will be incorporated in to help elevate these levels and to challenge the player to be better than they are right now.
- e. **Periodization-** This is an important aspect when dealing with player development. There are three cycles when developing a player at any level. The way you start to develop the overall training regimen is to first create the complete picture of what you want. Since the training will enter its most complex phase at the 11v11 level, it is important to create the image of what you want that player to look like at the end of their 4 years going through this part of the series. What type of technical player should they be? What should

they understand tactically? What should this player understand psychologically? Where should they be in their physiological development? Create that picture with as much detail as possible, then you can start to look at Periodization and each of the three cycles.

- i. **Macrocycle-** This is the largest of the three cycles. Since we are dealing with 11v11 and this covers the final 2 years of the development cycle, I look at the Macrocycle as being 2 Complete Cycles. The first cycle would be year 1 (Under 17). What do they need to learn in that first year of development at 11v11? Be as complete as possible when creating this image. The second cycle would be year 2 (Under 19). What do they need to learn in that second year of development at 11v11? Be as complete as possible when creating this image. This is where you begin to create the image of what a player should look like as they go through your club.
- ii. **Mesocycle-** Once you've created your Macrocycle and you have the image of what a player should learn in each year, then you can divide each of those years into two parts. This would be your Mesocycles. There would be a total of 4 Complete Cycles. In year 1 you would have 2 separate cycles (Fall and Spring). This would be the same for year 2 (Fall and Spring). Again, it is important that you follow what you had on the previous cycle and be as complete as you can.
- iii. **Microcycle-** This is where you start breaking everything down to what should be covered week to week in the development of the player. You started by identifying where the player should be at the conclusion of their development. You then broke that down into two equal parts; Year 1 and Year 2. You broke that down even farther into Fall and Spring for each of the two years. Now you have to take that and break it down into week by week. This is a simple way of explaining and understanding what Periodization is when it comes to youth player development.

The Director or Technical Director (whoever is in charge of determining training style and methods) must also decide how training will be structured. There are several ways to accomplish this:

- 1) **Team Training-** The normal process of team training is where a team trains and develops independently and is overseen by the Directors. This is the most common method across the country and caters more towards a coach-driven model rather than a model driven by a Director or the club.

- 2) **Combined Team Training-** This is where you have teams of the same age training together. There would be a coach for each team, but the education would be directed by one coach with the other assisting. Most sessions would run together with both teams and would only be divided out for scrimmages and games. This is effective for training 11v11 and simulates more of a college style, but it would not be recommended for younger 11v11 ages.
- 3) **Academy-Style Training-** This is where teams will train separately but are combined once per week with another team of a similar level to help challenge them. It is common that teams a year or two younger would train with an older team. In some cases, players would mix so that younger and stronger players might train up a year or two to accelerate their development.
- 4) **Professional-Style Training-** This may be in combination with one of the other styles. This involves pulling players by position from teams and incorporating them into position-specific training. All triangle midfield players would train together as this would help them in their understanding of their roles and responsibilities. It also helps younger players learn from the older players. It helps the older players as they become role models for the younger players. This is also effective in developing more of a club-central mindset.

Your main responsibility as a Director is to ensure that the coaches you hire are training and developing the players the way you want them developed. This guide is a structured program following the development of players through the 1-4-3-3 Formation from the very beginning of competitive soccer at the Under 9 Age Level through to the final level of Under 19 right before college or the pre-professional ages. This is NOT an all-inclusive guide of what to train and how to train, that is far more detail than any guide or program could cover. This guide is an overall structure of training and development of the players with examples of exercises to accomplish those goals. Some of it will be repetitive at different age levels because training is about repetition of exercises to master certain skills and behaviors. The specifics of training is left to the coaches themselves and you as a Director to make sure they are following (i.e. Individual Defending and Positioning of the Defenders, trapping and receiving the ball into the direction of your next touch or pass, etc.).

Directors also have other responsibilities when it comes to the development of players and coaches. Is a coach effectively able to develop players at a certain level or would they be more effective at a lower or even higher level? Your ability to read this and to determine when the right time to change or rotate coaches is a delicate process. I have always found that it is a good plan to have a structure of two years for coaches for any team they coach. It is good for the coaches to shift every two years for their growth and for them to stay fresh, but it is also

good for the players to remain fresh and to always learn and grow. A different approach every two years while still following the same development model (like this Guide) is an important part of the growth of the player. You also have to determine when players need to be promoted from the 2nd Team to the 1st Team or even from one age group to another. You also must look at the reverse, when does a player need to be relegated from the 1st Team to the 2nd Team. There are several factors to consider when you do this:

- Is the player not being challenged at their current team or level? Will promotion or relegation result in the player being properly challenged without damaging his or her confidence in the process?
- What are the roster sizes of each team and will this adversely affect either team due to the promotion or relegation? For example, the first team has 17 players and wants to pull up a player from the 2nd team who only has 13 players. The player they want to pull up is a defender and the 1st team already has 7 defenders. Can this be solved initially by having the player guest at a tournament or two before making such a dramatic move?
- Are there other factors to consider, such as the player travels a distance to get to training and games and comes with a group of other players to attend training and all of them are on the same team? Again, it might better be served to have her guest first before making the move.
- Is this move absolutely necessary and won't adversely affect either team. Can this be done by either starting with guest playing and then moving into a dual roster situation first?

As the Director you must be the deciding voice in this process. Coaches and parents will always look at it from an emotional and personal level. Your decision must be based upon what is best for the development of that player, the other players around her, and for the club overall.

The Director is also involved in the process of evaluating the coaches under their immediate direction. When you as the Director sits down to write up Coaching Evaluations you may have the input from Assistants or Coordinators. If not, then it is completely up to you as the Director to evaluate and determine the growth plan for each coach and areas for improvement and weaknesses that need to be addressed. A lot of this will be based on your philosophy as a Director and what you expect of them as coaches. The following is based upon an attacking model in a 1-4-3-3 Formation Style of play. These include the following:

- All Coaches will play an attacking style of soccer based around strong development of technique modeling the 1-4-3-3 style of play or a variation of this at younger ages. Coaches will implement training and development that focuses on a strong technical

curriculum while also teaching this style of play. Directors are responsible for supervising the coaches in their implementation of this style of training and playing.

- All Coaches will perform evaluations of all their players twice per year (your formula as far as how you evaluate players). This will include an evaluation done once at the end of the Fall Semester (late November to early December) and once at the beginning of May. All evaluations are to be submitted electronically to the Director and checked prior to the coaches distributing them to the players and parents. It is encouraged that all coaches meet one on one with the players and parents when giving out their evaluations but is not required. Once the Director has approved the evaluations for release they will forward them on to the Club for collection and archive purposes.
- All Coaches will have pre-planning documents (Planned Tournaments, training days, times, and locations, anticipated league play) that are completed at the very beginning of the season and right after tryouts. These documents are to be done by the Coaches with the Director's input and oversight. Once this documentation is complete the Director will collect, copy, and submit to the Club. The Director will retain copies for their records in working with each coach.
- Directors are responsible for making sure that tryout plans are organized collectively and implemented properly during tryouts. Tryouts should be conducted where the Director has full visibility of all teams under their direction. They may also have their own team they are responsible for, but teams under their direction must be within the same general area and not separated to another location or facility.
- Directors will also make sure their coaches are properly attired at training and games. Any violation of this will be first addressed through a warning. A continued violation will mean you send the coach home and combine their team with another team. Coaches must always be presentable and identifiable as Coaches and Teams from Your Club. Coaches must look professional and wear the Club Crest with honor and respect.
- We do not want joystick coaches during games, and we do not want negativity in our coaching styles. We can work with coaches to change or modify behavior, but we cannot allow negativity in a coach that is directed in any way towards players, parents, spectators, officials, other coaches, or opposing players.
- You may find that coaches are used to doing things on their own and want to be left alone. It needs to be made clear that this will NOT happen, and we are here to develop them as coaches, help them to develop their players, and to create an environment where we accelerate this learning. Our goal is to create the best club in the Area where the competition tries to copy us. Any coach who cannot subscribe to this will not remain as a coach with the Club.

CLUB STRUCTURE

This section focuses on the structure of the club I have put into place where I am now. The first part of this section will focus on the overall structure and planning for the Club. This will begin with each age level and its structure of responsibility for the Club. The following information is based upon a projection of where we would like to be but will be scaled back to fit the current structure of the Club. This section will focus on the number of teams and a structure involving what I call Age Group Coordinators (AGCs) and what they are generally responsible for. It will only include the formation at that age level as the next section will focus on the specifics of training and development for each age level.

Under 9 and Under 10 Age Levels (Play is 7v7- 6 Field Players and a GK)

Formation- 1-2-3-1

Age Group Coordinator- Someone who oversees the coaching of these two age groups. It is usually one of the more experienced coaches coaching in this area.

Under 9 Teams

- Team #1
- Team #2
- Team #3
- Team #4

Under 10 Teams

- Team #1
- Team #2
- Team #3
- Team #4

Under 11 and Under 12 Age Levels (Play is 9v9- 8 Field Players and a GK)

Formation- 1-3-2-3

Age Group Coordinator- Someone who oversees the coaching of these two age groups. It is usually one of the more experienced coaches coaching in this area.

Under 11 Teams

- Team #1
- Team #2

Under 12 Teams

Development Academy Team
Team #2
Team #3

Under 13 and Under 14 Age Levels (Play is 11v11)

Formation- 1-4-3-3

Age Group Coordinator- Someone who oversees the coaching of these two age groups. It is usually one of the more experienced coaches coaching in this area.

Under 13 Teams

Development Academy Team
Team #2
Team #3

Under 14 Teams

Team #1 (GAL or ECNL Team)
Team #2
Team #3

Under 15 and Under 16 Age Levels (Advanced 11v11)

Formation- 1-4-3-3

Age Group Coordinator- Someone who oversees the coaching of these two age groups. It is usually one of the more experienced coaches coaching in this area.

Under 15 Teams

Team #1 (GAL or ECNL Team)
Team #2
Team #3

Under 16 Teams

Team #1 (GAL or ECNL Team)
Team #2
Team #3

Under 17 and Under 19 Age Levels (College Prep)

Formation- 1-4-3-3

Teams will learn, train, and play other formations

Age Group Coordinator- Someone who oversees the coaching of these two age groups. It is usually one of the more experienced coaches coaching in this area.

Under 17 Teams

Team #1 (GAL or ECNL Team)

Team #2

Team #3

Under 19 Teams

Team #1 (GAL or ECNL Team)

Team #2 (NPL Team)

Team #3

Under 23 Age Level (Professional Development)

Professional Development League Team (PDL- Men's Under 23)

Team #1 (PDL Team)

Team #2 (Reserve Team)

Women's Premier Level (WPSL/ WSL/ UWS/ W-League Team)

Team #1 (Premier League Team)

Team #2 (Reserve Team)

Under 11 Age Level Program



TECHINCAL DEVELOPMENT



TACTICAL DEVELOPMENT



PSYCHOLOGICAL DEVELOPMENT



PHYSIOLOGICAL DEVELOPMENT



Pre-Training and Homework Activities

The focus should be to start to transition from small-sided play where options in possession is taught to teaching positional roles and responsibilities and starting to build into a larger game. The 2nd half of Under 10s should have transitioned slightly to begin teaching more positional and formational roles and responsibilities. This will continue that development where the players will still work in small-sided games, but you will start seeing larger games where positional and situational training will start to take on a larger role in player development. This does not mean that the focus is shifting from technical training to a more tactical content. It does mean that training will start to become more economical as your focus will start to expand to include more tactical and technical responsibilities. Technical training will continue to be a focus, but the focus will shift to include more of a speed element.

Players will usually arrive a few minutes early for training, or you may want to have them work on touches when they are at home. If these are activities they are doing before training, then have them work on it for no more than 10 minutes. If you condition the parents and players correctly, every player will arrive early enough to perform the pre-training activities and players will grab their ball and get started without you telling them to. Here are some activities for them to work on:

- **Pick-ups-** Have the players work on placing the ball on the ground and rolling it up onto their foot to start juggling. Have them create different ways to begin juggling and make it a competition before you start. Make sure to encourage players to use both feet when doing this.
- **Juggling and Sequence Juggling-** Have players start with the ball in their hands and work on dropping it to their right foot and hitting it back to their hands and catching the ball. Then do the same to the left foot. Then progress to right foot to right knee to hands, then left foot to left knee to hands. See if you can build to the chest and head before catching the ball. The reason for sequence juggling is it works on training them to vary the strength of their touches when juggling. Players can also do free form juggling where they work on getting as many touches as possible before the ball hits the ground.
- **Dribbling-** Set a small box down (10x10) and encourage players to work on dribbling inside the box while keeping the ball close. Make sure they work on staying inside the box as they dribble and that they are alternating using their right foot and left foot.
- **Pattern Dribbling-** Have the players start in the middle of the 10x10 grid by placing a cone in the middle as a starting point. Players then work on dribbling out to a corner cone and around it and back to the middle cone each time until they have gone

- around each of the corner cones and back to the middle. Make it a competition by seeing who can be the fastest to accomplish this.
- **Wall or Partner Passing-** Have the players take the technical instruction given in training and have them work on these techniques as homework. Players can work with a partner or against a wall with flat grass. If with a partner, the players will work on passing the ball back and forth targeting the foot of the partner they are passing to (i.e. right to right or left to left). The technical passing should always be 2-touch play. The first touch is to receive the ball and the second touch is the skill of passing. Players should work on building a rhythm where they try to pass the ball at a consistent speed and work on building to pass faster.

TECHINICAL DEVELOPMENT

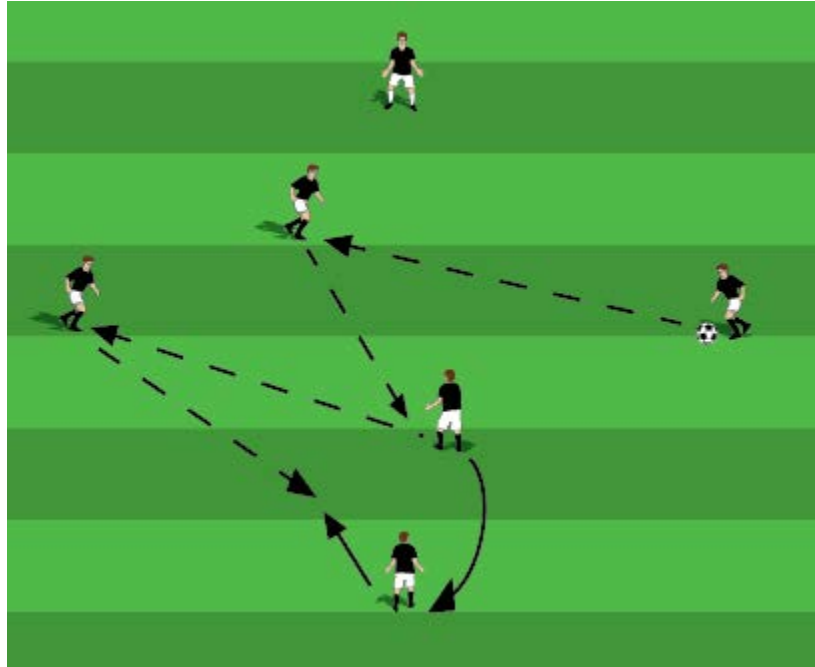
Your focus should now expand from fundamental technical exercises to include more pattern exercises, small-sided exercises, and more of an emphasis on speed. This is where we start to expand and build on possession and how to possess as a team.

- **Technical Passing-** Two players are positioned 5-6 yards apart and work on passing the ball back and forth. Make sure they are focused on keeping their hips around the ball and not opening up to receive. Players should also work on using two-touches always. The first touch is the all important receiving touch or first touch (the most important touch in the game of soccer). Your second touch is the actual skill of passing the ball. It is important to focus on the two separate touches as they are two separate technical skills. Perform this for 45-60 seconds to the right, then 45-60 seconds to the left for a total of three times at every training session. Technical Passing is a staple training exercise at every level, u9 to professional, and should be done in some form at every session.



- **Pattern Passing (PPD)-** This is a pattern passing exercise that is not completely scripted like other passing patterns. This one requires players to move, communicate, read, and think. These are important elements that need to be taught early for players to be creative and dynamic players. In this exercise you have 6-7 players participating (6 is the ideal number). Have four players form the shape of a diamond that is separated by approximately 20 yards with two players inside the diamond. The ball begins with one of the players outside in the diamond being passed into one of the middle players. While the ball is being passed into the one middle player the other middle player moves to support underneath the middle player receiving the ball. The first middle player receives and passes it to the second middle player. The second middle player receives

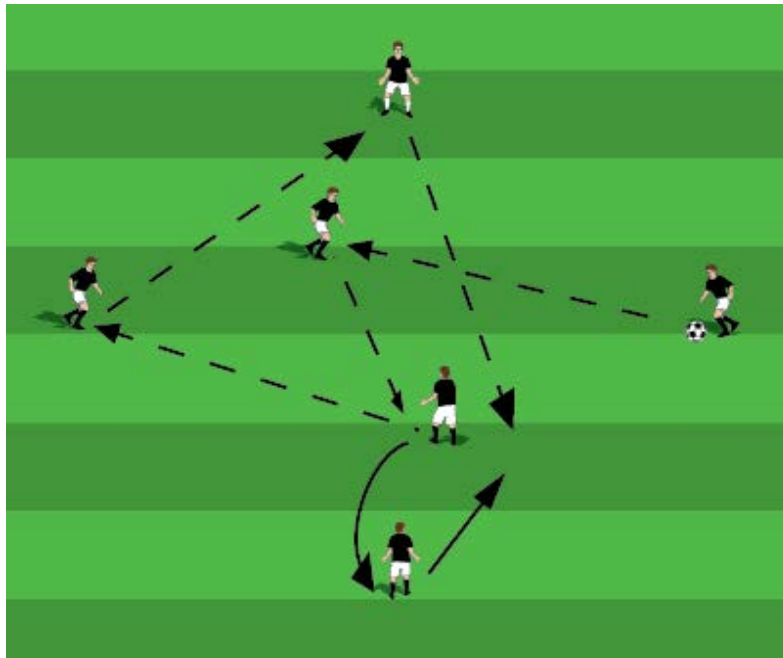
and passes to one of the other players outside of the diamond (cannot be the original player it started with). That middle player who passed the ball out then switches places with one of the other diamond players on the outside. The player who is entering then receives the ball as they come in while the other middle player supports underneath them. The exercise is continuous.



COACHING POINTS

- ✓ Emphasize the technical Points that have been taught since u9. Make sure that passes are crisp and that they are targeted. Players should not just pass to the player, but rather target a certain foot to help prepare them to pass to the next player.
- ✓ Players need to technically prepare by always adjusting the positioning of their hips and being balanced (balls of your feet and surveying the area).
- ✓ Players need to find the rhythm of the game (a Brazilian Phrase). That means play the flow of the game. The ball wants to go in a certain direction, so don't pull it back into pressure or away from where it wants to go. Find the rhythm of the game and play that rhythm. This will result in playing soccer that is effortless and faster, including when you add pressure.

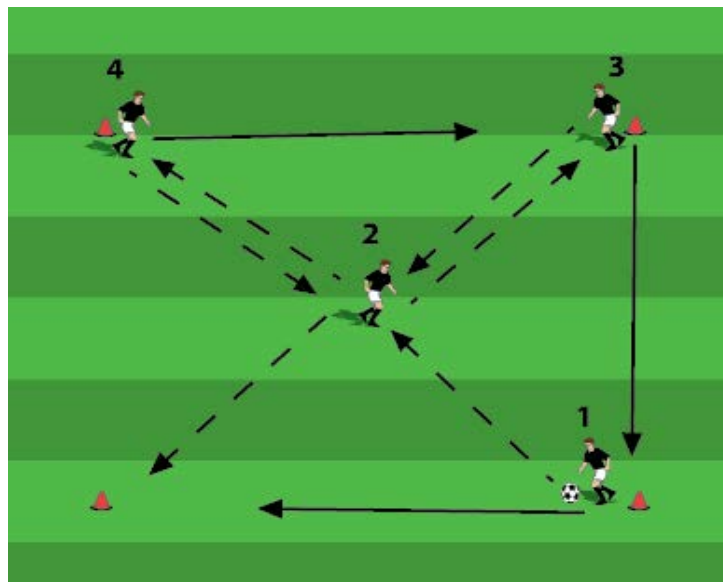
- **Pattern Passing (PPD2)**- This is a pattern passing exercise is a progression of the previous one. In this exercise you have 6-7 players participating (6 is the ideal number). Have four players form the shape of a diamond that is separated by approximately 20 yards with two players inside the diamond. The ball begins with one of the players outside in the diamond being passed into one of the middle players. While the ball is being passed into the one middle player the other middle player moves to support underneath the middle player receiving the ball. The first middle player receives and passes it to the second middle player. The second middle player receives and passes to one of the other players outside of the diamond (cannot be the original player it started with). That middle player who passed the ball out then switches places with one of the other diamond players on the outside. The outside player who just receives the ball then looks to play the ball to one of the other diamond players to their immediate left or right who is open and not switching in. That player then receives the ball and passes it into the player entering the middle of the diamond. The exercise is continuous.



COACHING POINTS

- ✓ Since these passing exercises are not scripted communication is a key to success. Make sure all players are communicating and reading the game.
- ✓ Players need to start learning how to direct one another by telling the player about to receive the ball where possession should go. This is an important part of developing that cerebral game of the player.
- ✓ Start putting pressure on the players by encouraging them to play faster.

- **Barca Passing 1-** This is more of a scripted passing exercise but requires players to move and adjust more quickly in a small situation. Set up a grid that is a maximum of 10x10 (for older players you would make it as small as 8x8). The exercise requires 4 players that are all working in coordination at the same time. A player is positioned on three of the four corners, as shown. The fourth player is positioned in the middle of the grid. The ball starts with one of the corner players and is passed inside to the middle player. Once they pass the ball they immediately move to the open corner. The middle player receives the ball and passes it out to the corner player on the side. The receiving corner player then passes it back into the middle player and immediately moves to the now open corner. Exercise is continuous for 45 seconds, then switch someone else into the middle. Make sure everyone has a chance to be the middle player twice.



COACHING POINTS

- ✓ This exercise requires quicker movement and touches. The player in the middle must always be adjusting their hips to be ready to receive and pass the ball to the next corner. They should always be shifting and moving to approach the ball at the best possible angle to make the next pass.
- ✓ Players need to move quickly when they are moving to the open cone. They need to get there and quickly prepare to receive the ball as the exercise runs very quickly.
- ✓ Condition players to make a one-touch pass when it's on and it feels right. Never just have the condition of one-touch passing as you will always have failure in this situation. Condition players to play one-touch when it's on so that it becomes more game like.

- **Barca Passing 2-** This is the same setup as the first version, except the flow of passing changes. The ball starts with one of the outside corner players and is passed in to the middle player. The middle player receives and passes the ball right back to the first player, then opens space in the middle. The corner player receives the ball and passes across to the other corner player and quickly moves to the open corner. The receiving player then passes to the other corner player. The new corner player receives the ball and passes into the middle player. The middle player receives and passes it back to the corner player who receives and passes across to the opposite corner player and quickly moves to the open cone. The opposite corner player receives and passes to the other corner player. Exercise is continuous for 45 seconds, then switch someone else into the middle. Make sure everyone has a chance to be the middle player twice.

-
-
-
-
-
-
-
-
-
-

COACHING POINTS

- ✓ This exercise requires quicker movement and touches. The player in the middle must always be adjusting their hips to be ready to receive and pass the ball to the next corner. They should always be shifting and moving to approach the ball at the best possible angle to make the next pass.
- ✓ Players need to move quickly when they are moving to the open cone. They need to get there and quickly prepare to receive the ball as the exercise runs very quickly.
- ✓ Condition players to make a one-touch pass when it's on and it feels right. Never just have the condition of one-touch passing as you will always have failure in this situation. Condition players to play one-touch when it's on so that it becomes more game like.

TACTICAL DEVELOPMENT

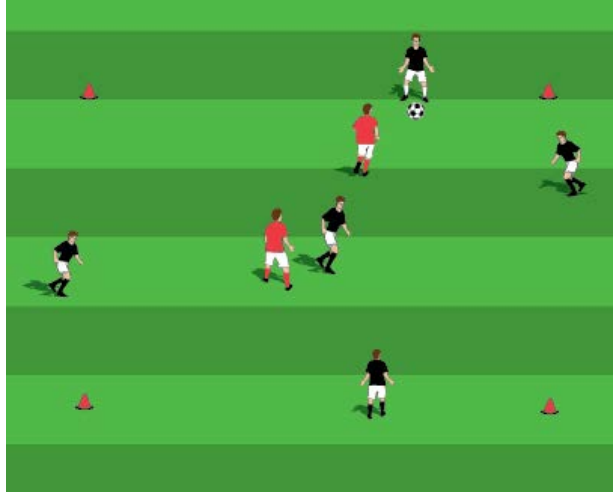
Your focus will be to continue to emphasize options in possession through small-sided games and to emphasize the same in the bigger game. You will start to build in a lot of relevance to positional roles and responsibilities through pattern passing and into the small-sided games so players start to understand the demands and requirements of positional needs. An emphasis will be on playing quicker and protecting possession. It is important to emphasize options in possession, but you must also preface this by making sure players understand that they must always look for the best option in possession. It may not always be the first option and might be the third or fourth option is the best.

- **4v2 in a Small Grid (8x8 to 10x10)**- The size of the grid will be determined by the skill level of the player. The better the skill the smaller the grid. In this grid, the four players work on moving the ball as quickly as possible while also trying to play their first option (when it's on). The exercise is very fast with a lot of turnover. If a defender wins the ball or the attacking player loses the ball, they switch right away with the other player and the exercise is continuous. Work with the positioning of the players so that ball side the supporting player is closer and weak side is higher.

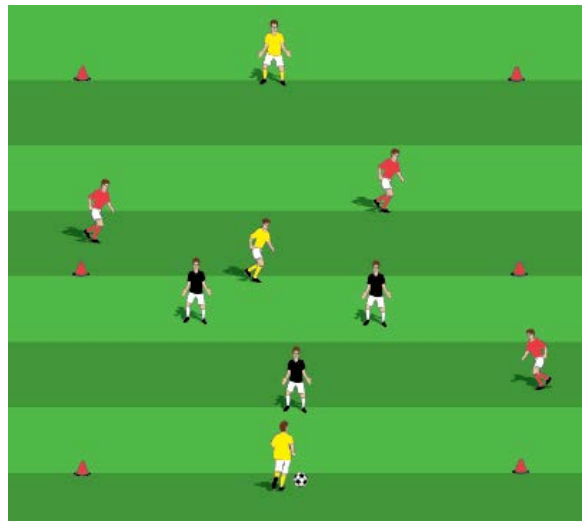


- **5v2 Small-Side Training**- In a 15x20 Grid place the players as shown in the grid below. The player at the bottom has possession to start. The play starts with letting them just play for a couple of minutes before you step in to start teaching them how to possess the ball. Go through the options in possession and then have them start playing again. You will need to now start also focusing on the technical components of the game that

you have been introducing since u9. Make sure players are passing across the body and targeting the correct foot when passing the ball. Make sure players have their hips open to the middle of the grid so that they are prepared for any option in possession. Make sure players are checking and moving to create space.



- **3v3v3 Transition Game-** In this exercise you have three teams of three playing in an area that is 12x20 to 15x25 (depending upon the skill level of the players). In this exercise two teams playing against one another with a third team of three as neutrals with possession. A neutral is positioned on each end with the third neutral in the middle (ACMF). The object is to possess the ball from one target to another target on each end. The defending team should coordinate together trying to force possession away from the middle player by forming a triangle and getting immediate pressure on the ball. Play the game for about 2 minutes, then switch the neutral team so that another team gets to play with possession all the time. Have each team work on the defending side at least two times.



Positional Training- You will introduce at this level the concept of Positional Training. Your focus will still include technique and the introduction of 9v9 as it builds from 7v7 Play. The introduction of the triangle shape will start to be more realistic and training will evolve to start examining the 11v11 game so players are prepared for that jump. You will certainly be illustrating positional roles and responsibilities within the small-sided games and technical training, but these are exercises that will focus on positional and formational training.

- **Training Forwards Attacking and Defensive Shape and Organization-** This is a simple Offense vs. Defense type of drill in that you have 3 forwards attacking 4 defenders with a large goal and GK. You can start by giving the 3 forwards two central supporting players, which would represent the central midfielders in their 3-2-3 system while also preparing them for playing a 1-4-3-3 System at 11v11.

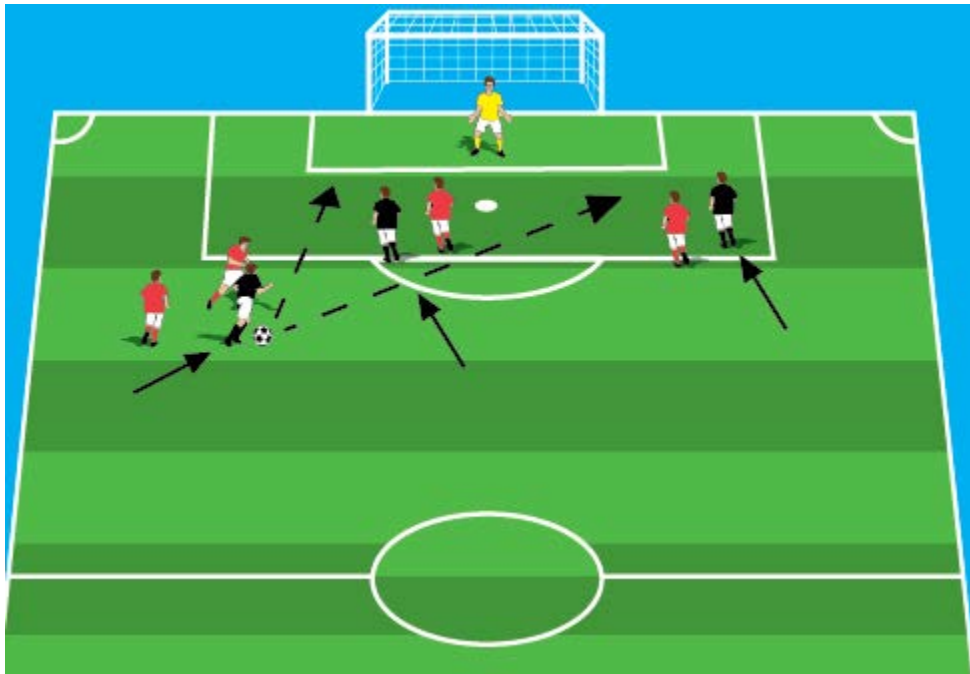


COACHING POINTS (FWDS)

- ✓ Playing 3 against 4 will create two situations where the forwards are 1v1. This will usually be the case out wide. In order to create these 1v1's you must play into the central option to start. Make sure you stress this to them.
- ✓ Wing attackers should attack wide to stretch out the defense and force the wing defender to defend 1v1.
- ✓ Forwards should work on framing the box with the central attacker making the near post run to eliminate the GK and the weak side wing attacker making the run to the back post.
- ✓ If the wing attacker cuts inside, then the central attacker should make a diagonal run in behind the defense to open up the option of a through ball being played right away. If the wing attacker cuts in they should either look to play the through ball, look to play a diagonal penetrating pass to the weak side wing attacker, or shoot from distance (diagram below).

COACHING POINTS (DEF)

- ✓ With the defenders, work on their shape so that they are always keeping the player with the ball wide. They should be pushing them out of the middle.
- ✓ Try to get a 'check mark' shape with the defender who is pressing the ball, the second defender at an angle back behind the ball slightly inside, the third defender central acting as the sweeper, and the fourth defender up slightly and central to protect against a ball played centrally.
- ✓ Condition defenders to switch positions if they are beat. If the wing attacker beats the wide defender they should not chase for longer than 1-3 seconds. The player immediately behind should be rotating out to pressure the ball while the wing defender recovers centrally.
- ✓ Good defenses are LOUD! Make sure they are always communicating with each other and coordinating their movements.
- ✓ Condition the defenders as soon as they win possession, they should have a target player they look to pass to. You do not want them just launching it out and giving up possession immediately. They should start thinking possession right away.



- **Training Forwards Attacking w/ MF Support and Defensive Shape and Organization-**
This is the same as the previous exercise, except you are focusing more on the roles of the midfielders in the system. Add in 3 central players to support the forwards. If you want to give more support to the four defenders you can also add in a defending central midfielder between the three midfielders. Have the three supporting central players

play with two players up and one player back. You can call the one player back the central defender supporting the two midfielders in the 1-3-2-3 System, but you are actually starting to prepare them for playing with a triangle midfield in a 1-4-3-3 System.

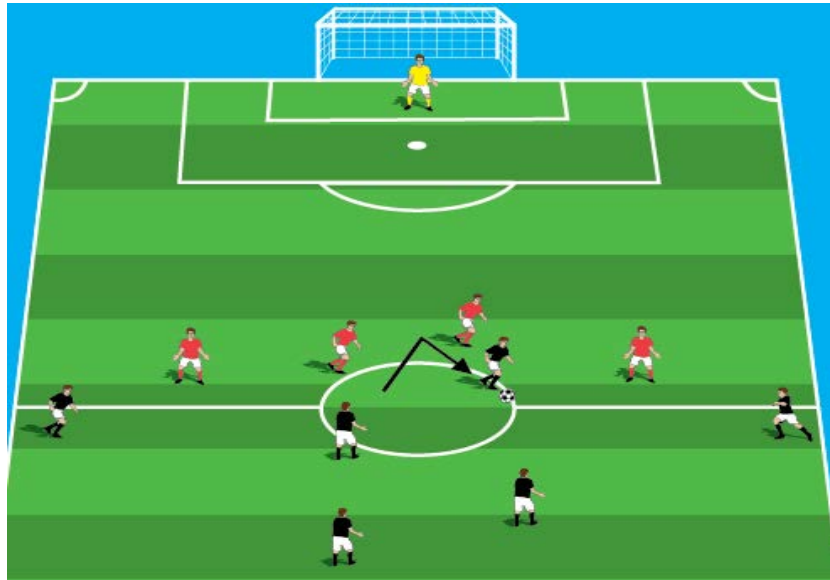


COACHING POINTS (MF)

- ✓ With the two attacking midfielder players you need to work on their positioning in relation to the ball. The midfielder ball side should be supporting closer but should be slightly behind the ball. The weak side midfielder should be higher and should read the movement of the central attacker. If they come out of the middle to receive the ball, then they attack the space forward that they vacated.
- ✓ The third player supporting central should be very focused on keeping the shape of a triangle by staying in a central position behind the two central midfielders.
- ✓ The distance between midfielder players on average should be 12-15 yards. The person responsible for their spacing is the holding central midfielder behind the two attacking central midfielders. They must be vocal and not afraid to direct the two midfielders in front of them.

- **Training Forwards Attacking w/ MF Support and Defensive Shape and Organization 2-**
Move the same exercise into a more central midfield position to get the players to

recognize how and when to penetrate. You can also work on proper defensive shape from a further distance from goal to make sure players are keeping their defensive shape. Remember, add more pressure by placing a defending midfielder in the middle of the three midfielders. As they progress and get more confident you can add a second defending player in the midfield.



COACHING POINTS

- ✓ Work on the central midfielders positioning behind the ball. The two central midfielders are always reacting to the central attacker. Weak side always shifts up and the ball side always supports underneath the ball.
- ✓ The holding midfielder is known as the 'linking player'. They link possession from the defense to the attacking players, but they also control the flow of the play from one side of the field to the other. They should be quick 1-2 touch players and should not look to dribble forward. As we progress in teaching them the system on a larger scale they will work on rotating and shifting within the triangle. First, make sure they understand their roles and positioning before you throw too much at them.
- ✓ You can begin with subtle changes and switching positions with the central attacker and weak side central midfielder. In a situation where the central attacker shifts wide to get the ball and the weak side central midfielder shifts up to take their space, the central attacker becomes a central midfielder and the other two midfielders should adjust their positions to keep the triangle.

PSYCHOLOGICAL DEVELOPMENT



Players at this age want to learn and have a tendency to learn by repeating the act they see. If you perform it well and demonstrate it clearly and properly, they will learn the skill for a lifetime. The important thing to understand is that they are easily distracted and easily intimidated in an atmosphere that is not open and creative. The environment that you create must be positive and supportive and strongly emphasizes fun. Don't be afraid to have a personality with the players and to laugh with act goofy at times. They will be more relaxed and open to what you are teaching them and will pick up what you are trying to teach them faster. It requires a lot of patience and energy to coach this way, but it is well worth it!

The style of coaching you would implement with this age level is **DIRECTED COACHING**. This method is always recommended when working with younger players. There are five criteria to keep in mind when using a **Directed Learning** Strategy:

- 1) **Organize Your Sessions-** Your sessions should be laid out and set for the players before they arrive. I would suggest a coach be at the session to set up at least 20-30 minutes in advance. Players should arrive 10 minutes prior to the session and start performing their pre-training activities. Once the start time for your session arrives, then you begin right on time.
- 2) **Structure-** Sessions should be structured and organized so that they are easy for players to see and understand and easy for you to move from one exercise to the next. Session layout should not be too complicated and too busy with a lot of cones or materials. Too much is too much at this level.
- 3) **Simple Information-** Remember the audience you have. You may understand what you are talking about, but young players may not. Make sure to think about what you are saying and to keep your information simple and jargon-free.
- 4) **Start Easy and Progress to Difficult-** Make it easy to start so that your players have a lot of success. They want to feel success and so do you. They will not care how the initial success is achieved, so make sure to start your exercises so they will achieve success. As they progress you can quickly add pressure through opposing players, restricting time or limiting space.
- 5) **Timed Activities-** Your session length is limited to usually 75-90 minutes each. Be sure when you plan your sessions to time how long you want each activity to last. Don't feel like you have to be restricted to those times as sometimes you need to slow down, break something down, or progress quicker. These are all okay. You time your session

so that you create a natural flow and you know where you want to go from one exercise to the next. It gives you the ability to look at your session as you get into it and to decide when you need to move on.

There are four qualities that every coach should have when they are coaching younger players. Someone who coaches younger players and is successful at it is an art. Not everyone can do it. I will admit that I am not that coach. I am better with older players, which is understandable as I have been a college coach for more than 20 years and a Director at the youth level off and on for 20 years as well. These are the qualities you should look for when selecting coaches to coach younger players:

- 1) **Appearance-** I look at coach as a profession, whether a coach is doing this voluntarily or as a part time job. It is important that the coach look the part. They should be dressed appropriately. If it is a male coach, then their facial hair should be either trimmed or they should be clean-shaven. Hair should be kept well, or they should be wearing a club cap or soccer cap of some sort that is soil-free. Proper attire of a club shirt with soccer shorts, track or warm-ups pants should be worn.
- 2) **Approachable-** Players should feel comfortable approaching and talking to their coach. This would be the same with parents approaching the coach. I will stress, though, that it is the responsibility of the coach to set boundaries when it comes to parents approaching them. There is a right place and a right time to do this, and this needs to be properly clarified and explained by the coach in their initial meeting. Failure to do so will end up creating a much bigger problem for the coach later on.
- 3) **Positive Environment-** It is up to the coach to create an environment that is positive and supportive of the players. They should want to come to training. They should enjoy being at training. They should look forward to the next training session when it is over. They should feel challenged and that they learned something in the session. It is always a good idea to ask the players at the end of the session what you worked on to see if they understood what you were trying to teach them.
- 4) **Energy-** The coach who works with younger players really needs to have a lot of energy. Kids will always feed off the coach. If the coach has energy, the players will have energy. Keep in mind that the coach needs to have energy that is controlled and tempered and not unfocused and unstructured. The energy needs to have a focus and purpose.

Remember that **Directed Learning** is a style of teaching that has is structured by the coach. They control the environment and direct what the players are learning. They help the players to stay focused and to stay on task with the purpose of the session. This is where you will find the greatest success in learning for players at this age.

PHYSIOLOGICAL DEVELOPMENT



Making players run at this age is a waste of time. You should never be looking to train at this age for fitness or strength. The only areas of this type of development you might need to address would be psychomotricity or basic motor skills (i.e. balance and coordination). This might mean creating some exercises where you teach them to bound, jump, land, roll, etc. This never used to be the case as when kids were this age they used to be outside running and jumping all of the time. This is no longer the case as video games, television and technology has dominated the younger ages now. There may be situations where kids might need to be taught these skills. If so, be prepared to create a session that works on these that is fun and inspiring for the players.

Under 12 Age Level Program



TECHINICAL DEVELOPMENT



TACTICAL DEVELOPMENT



PSYCHOLOGICAL DEVELOPMENT



PHYSIOLOGICAL DEVELOPMENT



Pre-Training and Homework Activities

The focus should be to start to transition from small-sided play where options in possession is taught to teaching positional roles and responsibilities and starting to build into a larger game. The 2nd half of Under 10s should have transitioned slightly to begin teaching more positional and formational roles and responsibilities. This will continue that development where the players will still work in small-sided games, but you will start seeing larger games where positional and situational training will start to take on a larger role in player development. This does not mean that the focus is shifting from technical training to a more tactical content. It does mean that training will start to become more economical as your focus will start to expand to include more tactical and technical responsibilities. Technical training will continue to be a focus, but the focus will shift to include more of a speed element.

Players will usually arrive a few minutes early for training, or you may want to have them work on touches when they are at home. If these are activities they are doing before training, then have them work on it for no more than 10 minutes. If you condition the parents and players correctly, every player will arrive early enough to perform the pre-training activities and players will grab their ball and get started without you telling them to. Here are some activities for them to work on:

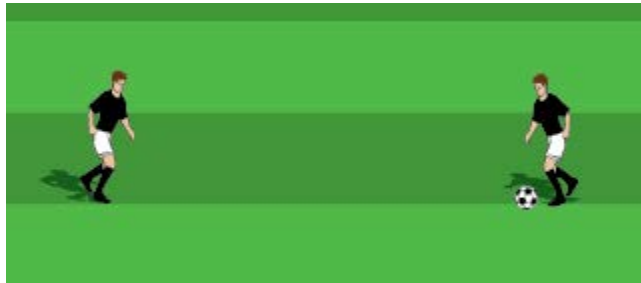
- **Pick-ups-** Have the players work on placing the ball on the ground and rolling it up onto their foot to start juggling. Have them create different ways to begin juggling and make it a competition before you start. Make sure to encourage players to use both feet when doing this.
- **Juggling and Sequence Juggling-** Have players start with the ball in their hands and work on dropping it to their right foot and hitting it back to their hands and catching the ball. Then do the same to the left foot. Then progress to right foot to right knee to hands, then left foot to left knee to hands. See if you can build to the chest and head before catching the ball. The reason for sequence juggling is it works on training them to vary the strength of their touches when juggling. Players can also do free form juggling where they work on getting as many touches as possible before the ball hits the ground.
- **Dribbling-** Set a small box down (10x10) and encourage players to work on dribbling inside the box while keeping the ball close. Make sure they work on staying inside the box as they dribble and that they are alternating using their right foot and left foot.
- **Pattern Dribbling-** Have the players start in the middle of the 10x10 grid by placing a cone in the middle as a starting point. Players then work on dribbling out to a corner cone and around it and back to the middle cone each time until they have gone

- around each of the corner cones and back to the middle. Make it a competition by seeing who can be the fastest to accomplish this.
- **Wall or Partner Passing-** Have the players take the technical instruction given in training and have them work on these techniques as homework. Players can work with a partner or against a wall with flat grass. If with a partner, the players will work on passing the ball back and forth targeting the foot of the partner they are passing to (i.e. right to right or left to left). The technical passing should always be 2-touch play. The first touch is to receive the ball and the second touch is the skill of passing. Players should work on building a rhythm where they try to pass the ball at a consistent speed and work on building to pass faster.

TECHINICAL DEVELOPMENT

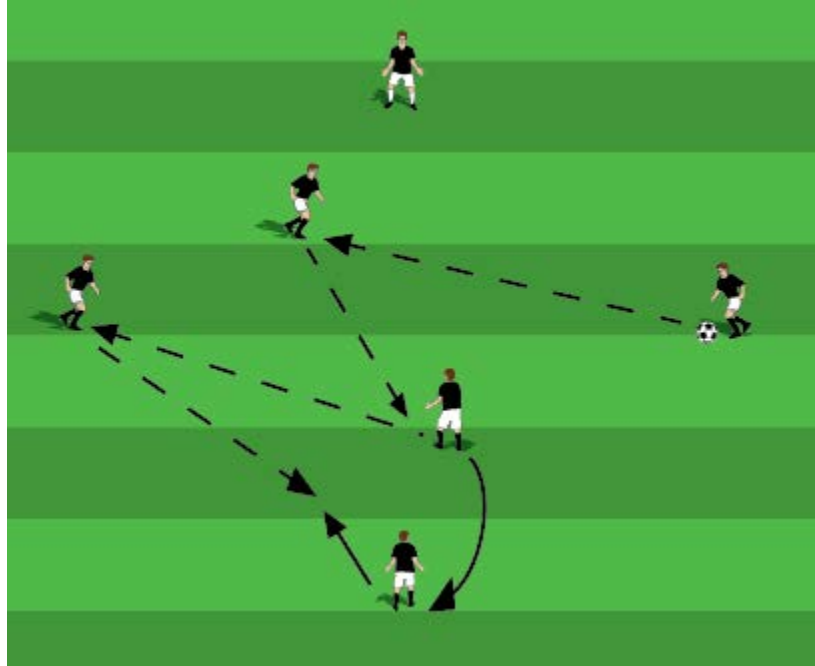
Your focus should now expand from fundamental technical exercises to include more pattern exercises, small-sided exercises, and more of an emphasis on speed. This is where we start to expand and build on possession and how to possess as a team. You will also start to focus on the technical needs of the player within positions. This will become more important as you progress through this phase and get closer to the 11v11 game.

- **Technical Passing-** Two players are positioned 5-6 yards apart and work on passing the ball back and forth. Make sure they are focused on keeping their hips around the ball and not opening up to receive. Players should also work on using two-touches always. The first touch is the all important receiving touch or first touch (the most important touch in the game of soccer). Your second touch is the actual skill of passing the ball. It is important to focus on the two separate touches as they are two separate technical skills. Perform this for 45-60 seconds to the right, then 45-60 seconds to the left for a total of three times at every training session. Technical Passing is a staple training exercise at every level, u9 to professional, and should be done in some form at every session.



- **Pattern Passing (PPD)-** This is a pattern passing exercise that is not completely scripted like other passing patterns. This one requires players to move, communicate, read, and think. These are important elements that need to be taught early for players to be creative and dynamic players. In this exercise you have 6-7 players participating (6 is the ideal number). Have four players form the shape of a diamond that is separated by approximately 20 yards with two players inside the diamond. The ball begins with one of the players outside in the diamond being passed into one of the middle players. While the ball is being passed into the one middle player the other middle player moves to support underneath the middle player receiving the ball. The first middle player receives and passes it to the second middle player. The second middle player receives and passes to one of the other players outside of the diamond (cannot be the original

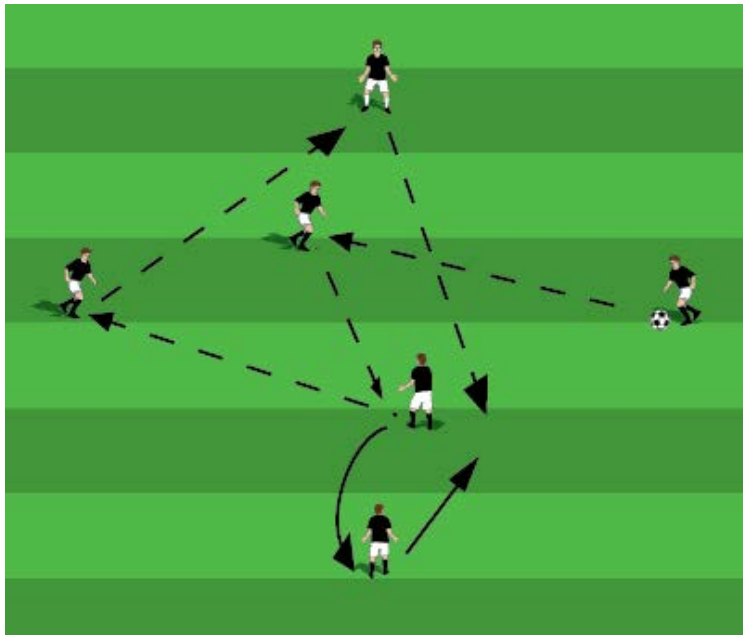
player it started with). That middle player who passed the ball out then switches places with one of the other diamond players on the outside. The player who is entering then receives the ball as they come in while the other middle player supports underneath them. The exercise is continuous.



COACHING POINTS

- ✓ Emphasize the technical Points that have been taught since u9. Make sure that passes are crisp and that they are targeted. Players should not just pass to the player, but rather target a certain foot to help prepare them to pass to the next player.
- ✓ Players need to technically prepare by always adjusting the positioning of their hips and being balanced (balls of your feet and surveying the area).
- ✓ Players need to find the rhythm of the game (a Brazilian Phrase). That means play the flow of the game. The ball wants to go in a certain direction, so don't pull it back into pressure or away from where it wants to go. Find the rhythm of the game and play that rhythm. This will result in playing soccer that is effortless and faster, including when you add pressure.

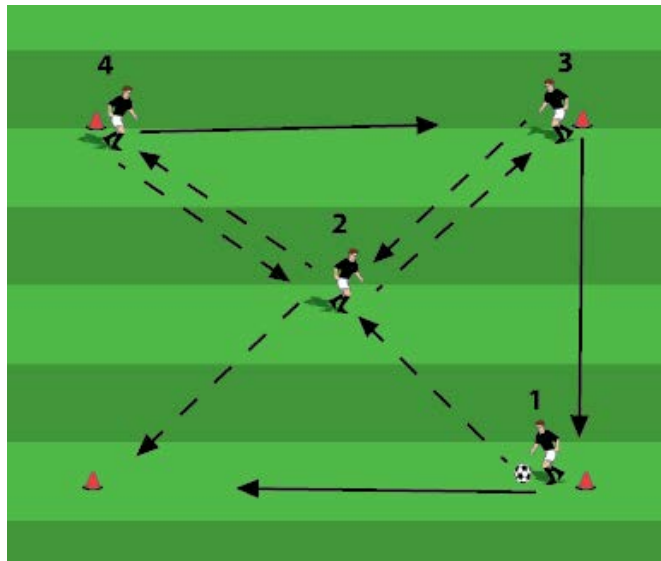
- **Pattern Passing (PPD2)**- This is a pattern passing exercise is a progression of the previous one. In this exercise you have 6-7 players participating (6 is the ideal number). Have four players form the shape of a diamond that is separated by approximately 20 yards with two players inside the diamond. The ball begins with one of the players outside in the diamond being passed into one of the middle players. While the ball is being passed into the one middle player the other middle player moves to support underneath the middle player receiving the ball. The first middle player receives and passes it to the second middle player. The second middle player receives and passes to one of the other players outside of the diamond (cannot be the original player it started with). That middle player who passed the ball out then switches places with one of the other diamond players on the outside. The outside player who just receives the ball then looks to play the ball to one of the other diamond players to their immediate left or right who is open and not switching in. That player then receives the ball and passes it into the player entering the middle of the diamond. The exercise is continuous.



COACHING POINTS

- ✓ Since these passing exercises are not scripted communication is a key to success. Make sure all players are communicating and reading the game.
- ✓ Players need to start learning how to direct one another by telling the player about to receive the ball where possession should go. This is an important part of developing that cerebral game of the player.
- ✓ Start putting pressure on the players by encouraging them to play faster.

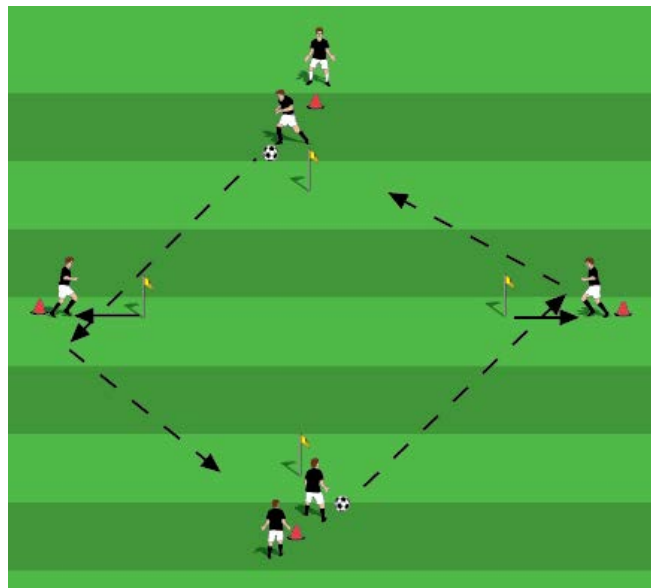
- **Barca Passing 1-** This is more of a scripted passing exercise but requires players to move and adjust more quickly in a small situation. Set up a grid that is a maximum of 10x10 (for older players you would make it as small as 8x8). The exercise requires 4 players that are all working in coordination at the same time. A player is positioned on three of the four corners, as shown. The fourth player is positioned in the middle of the grid. The ball starts with one of the corner players and is passed inside to the middle player. Once they pass the ball they immediately move to the open corner. The middle player receives the ball and passes it out to the corner player on the side. The receiving corner player then passes it back into the middle player and immediately moves to the now open corner. Exercise is continuous for 45 seconds, then switch someone else into the middle. Make sure everyone has a chance to be the middle player twice.



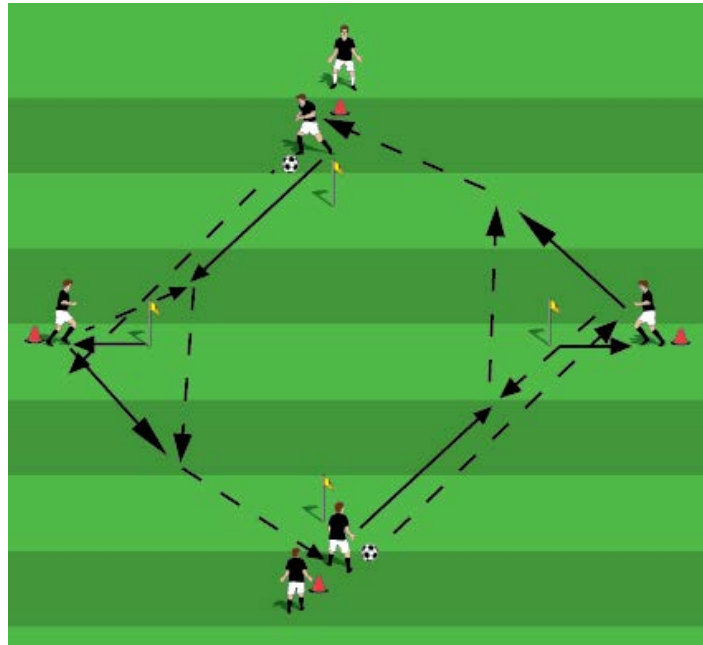
COACHING POINTS

- ✓ This exercise requires quicker movement and touches. The player in the middle must always be adjusting their hips to be ready to receive and pass the ball to the next corner. They should always be shifting and moving to approach the ball at the best possible angle to make the next pass.
- ✓ Players need to move quickly when they are moving to the open cone. They need to get there and quickly prepare to receive the ball as the exercise runs very quickly.
- ✓ Condition players to make a one-touch pass when it's on and it feels right. Never just have the condition of one-touch passing as you will always have failure in this situation. Condition players to play one-touch when it's on so that it becomes more game like.

- **Barca Passing 2-** This is the same setup as the first version, except the flow of passing changes. The ball starts with one of the outside corner players and is passed in to the middle player. The middle player receives and passes the ball right back to the first player, then opens space in the middle. The corner player receives the ball and passes across to the other corner player and quickly moves to the open corner. The receiving player then passes to the other corner player. The new corner player receives the ball and passes into the middle player. The middle player receives and passes it back to the corner player who receives and passes across to the opposite corner player and quickly moves to the open cone. The opposite corner player receives and passes to the other corner player. Exercise is continuous for 45 seconds, then switch someone else into the middle. Make sure everyone has a chance to be the middle player twice.
- **Diamond Passing 1-** This is also a little scripted, but it is very effective at incorporating movement and in getting players to target their passes and playing the ball across the receiving player's body. You will need six players and two soccer balls for this drill. Set up four cones that are 20 yards apart from north to south and east to west. If you have coaching sticks it would be better to use these in place of the cones. Have another cone that is 4 yards back from each coaching stick. The soccer balls will start across from each other (north and south) and be passed to the wide players to their right to start. Be sure to switch directions after a set period of time to work on passing and receiving equally with both feet. The player on the sides will start on the coaching stick and check off to receive the ball across their body. They should receive in the direction of their next pass. The drill is continuous and is very quick. Players follow their pass to the next line and must move quickly.



- **Diamond Passing 2-** The setup of the drill is the same as the first version. The pattern changes, though, as the player passing the ball continues towards the player they passed to. The receiving player passes back to the first player and then goes forward at an angle. The player then passes immediately back to the player in a give-and-go pattern. Encourage 1-touches and clean technique and accurate passes as you want this to be very quick in execution.



COACHING POINTS

- ✓ This exercise requires quick movement and touches. The player receiving starts on the flag, then checks quickly back to the cone keeping their hips open to the middle of the drill so they can receive the pass across their body.
- ✓ Players need to move quickly when they are moving to the open up to receive the ball. The player needs to prepare to receive the ball by staying on the balls of their feet.
- ✓ Condition players to make their first touch in the direction of their next pass. Their touches must be clean and deliberate.
- ✓ Players after passing the ball must follow quickly to the player they just passed the ball to and take their spot on that line. When approaching for a combination, the player must again be on the balls of their feet and play a 1-touch pass in the space in front of the player for a give-and-go type of pass.

TACTICAL DEVELOPMENT

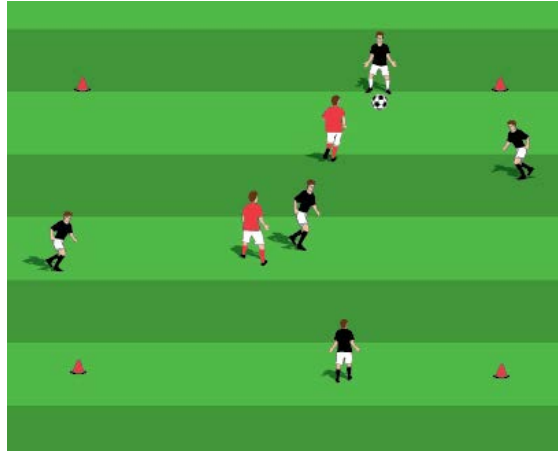
Your focus will be to continue to emphasize options in possession through small-sided games and to emphasize the same in the bigger game. You will start to build in a lot of relevance to positional roles and responsibilities through pattern passing and into the small-sided games so players start to understand the demands and requirements of positional needs. An emphasis will be on playing quicker and protecting possession. It is important to emphasize options in possession, but you must also preface this by making sure players understand that they must always look for the best option in possession. It may not always be the first option and might be the third or fourth option is the best.

- **4v2 in a Small Grid (8x8 to 10x10)**- The size of the grid will be determined by the skill level of the player. The better the skill the smaller the grid. In this grid, the four players work on moving the ball as quickly as possible while also trying to play their first option (when it's on). The exercise is very fast with a lot of turnover. If a defender wins the ball or the attacking player loses the ball, they switch right away with the other player and the exercise is continuous. Work with the positioning of the players so that ball side the supporting player is closer and weak side is higher.



- **5v2 Small-Side Training**- In a 15x20 Grid place the players as shown in the grid below. The player at the bottom has possession to start. The play starts with letting them just play for a couple of minutes before you step in to start teaching them how to possess the ball. Go through the options in possession and then have them start playing again. You will need to now start also focusing on the technical components of the game that you have been introducing since u9. Make sure players are passing across the body and targeting the correct foot when passing the ball. Make sure players have their hips open

to the middle of the grid so that they are prepared for any option in possession. Make sure players are checking and moving to create space.

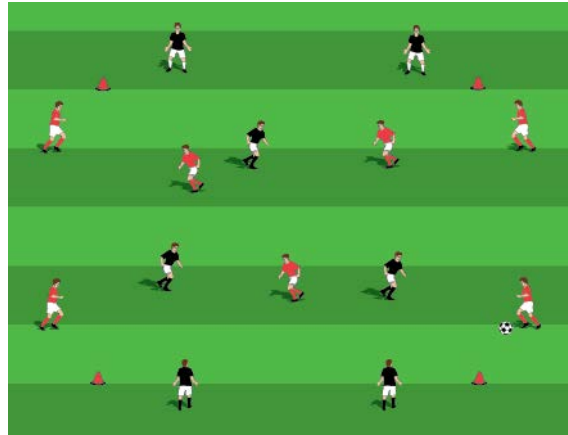


- **5v3 Small-Sided Training-** In a 15x20 Grid place the players as shown in the grid below. The player at the top has possession to start. Playing 5v3 starts to teach players how to deal with pressure, but also focuses on teaching players movement off the ball. This is also the start of teaching players how to play against different systems. In a 5v2 you are playing against a formation that has 2 central midfielders. In a 5v3 you are teaching your players how to play against formations that incorporate 3 central midfielders. This requires the central player to be more active and smarter in their movements, but also disciplined in their movement so that they are not getting drawn too far outside.



- **3v3 to Wide Supporting Players (Triangle MF Training)-** This is an excellent drill to start working with training your triangle midfield. Usually you set up a grid that is 25x25, but you may want to make it smaller to start (20x20). Play inside the grid is 3v3. On the north to south lines one team works on possessing the ball. On the east to west lines the other team works on possessing the ball. Work with the movement of the triangle

while inside the grid. They shouldn't be rigid in their movements. Encourage them to move and switch and rotate focusing only on keeping a distance of 12-15 yards in possession while always keeping the shape of the triangle. In defense, work with them on getting a tip on the ball (a player in front of the ball to block a forward pass). The other two players should be positioned behind the tip at a distance of approximately 8-10 yards.



- **3v3v3 Transition Game-** In this exercise you have three teams of three playing in an area that is 12x20 to 15x25 (depending upon the skill level of the players). In this exercise two teams playing against one another with a third team of three as neutrals with possession. A neutral is positioned on each end with the third neutral in the middle (ACMF). The object is to possess the ball from one target to another target on each end. The defending team should coordinate together trying to force possession away from the middle player by forming a triangle and getting immediate pressure on the ball. Play the game for about 2 minutes, then switch the neutral team so that another team gets to play with possession all the time. Have each team work on the defending side at least two times.



Positional Training- You will certainly be illustrating positional roles and responsibilities within the small-sided games and technical training, but these are exercises that will focus on positional and formational training.

- **Training Forwards Attacking and Defensive Shape and Organization-** This is a simple Offense vs. Defense type of drill in that you have 3 forwards attacking 4 defenders with a large goal and GK. You can start by giving the 3 forwards two central supporting players, which would represent the central midfielders in their 3-2-3 system while also preparing them for playing a 1-4-3-3 System at 11v11.

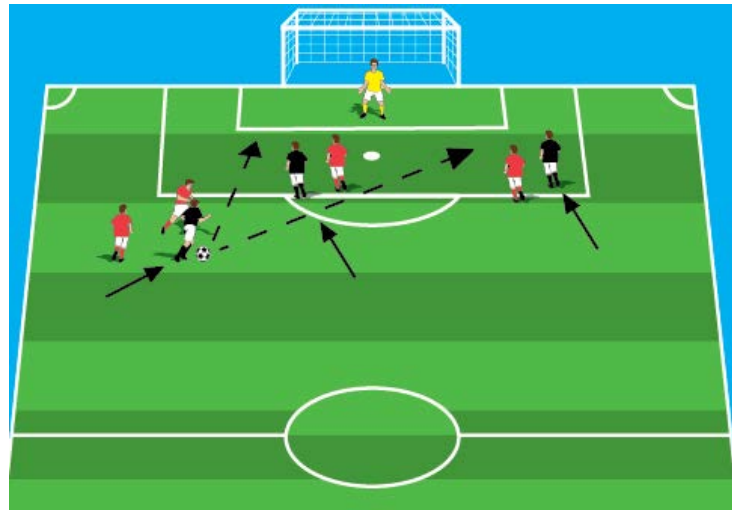


COACHING POINTS (FWDS)

- ✓ Playing 3 against 4 will create two situations where the forwards are 1v1. This will usually be the case out wide. In order to create these 1v1's you must play into the central option to start. Make sure you stress this to them.
- ✓ Wing attackers should attack wide to stretch out the defense and force the wing defender to defend 1v1.
- ✓ Forwards should work on framing the box with the central attacker making the near post run to eliminate the GK and the weak side wing attacker making the run to the back post.
- ✓ If the wing attacker cuts inside, then the central attacker should make a diagonal run in behind the defense to open up the option of a through ball being played right away. If the wing attacker cuts in they should either look to play the through ball, look to play a diagonal penetrating pass to the weak side wing attacker, or shoot from distance (diagram below).

COACHING POINTS (DEF)

- ✓ With the defenders, work on their shape so that they are always keeping the player with the ball wide. They should be pushing them out of the middle.
- ✓ Try to get a 'check mark' shape with the defender who is pressing the ball, the second defender at an angle back behind the ball slightly inside, the third defender central acting as the sweeper, and the fourth defender up slightly and central to protect against a ball played centrally.
- ✓ Condition defenders to switch positions if they are beat. If the wing attacker beats the wide defender they should not chase for longer than 1-3 seconds. The player immediately behind should be rotating out to pressure the ball while the wing defender recovers centrally.
- ✓ Good defenses are LOUD! Make sure they are always communicating with each other and coordinating their movements.
- ✓ Condition the defenders as soon as they win possession, they should have a target player they look to pass to. You do not want them just launching it out and giving up possession immediately. They should start thinking possession right away.



- **Training Forwards Attacking w/ MF Support and Defensive Shape and Organization-**
This is the same as the previous exercise, except you are focusing more on the roles of the midfielders in the system. Add in 3 central players to support the forwards. If you want to give more support to the four defenders you can also add in a defending central midfielder between the three midfielders. Have the three supporting central players play with two players up and one player back. You can call the one player back the central defender supporting the two midfielders in the 1-3-2-3 System, but you are actually starting to prepare them for playing with a triangle midfield in a 1-4-3-3 System.



COACHING POINTS (MF)

- ✓ With the two attacking midfield players you need to work on their positioning in relation to the ball. The midfielder ball side should be supporting closer but should be slightly behind the ball. The weak side midfielder should be higher and should read the movement of the central attacker. If they come out of the middle to receive the ball, then they attack the space forward that they vacated.
- ✓ The third player supporting central should be very focused on keeping the shape of a triangle by staying in a central position behind the two central midfielders.
- ✓ The distance between midfield players on average should be 12-15 yards. The person responsible for their spacing is the holding central midfielder behind the two attacking central midfielders. They must be vocal and not afraid to direct the two midfielders in front of them.

- **Training Forwards Attacking w/ MF Support and Defensive Shape and Organization 2-**
Move the same exercise into a more central midfield position to get the players to recognize how and when to penetrate. You can also work on proper defensive shape from a further distance from goal to make sure players are keeping their defensive shape. Remember, add more pressure by placing a defending midfielder in the middle of the three midfielders. As they progress and get more confident you can add a second defending player in the midfield.



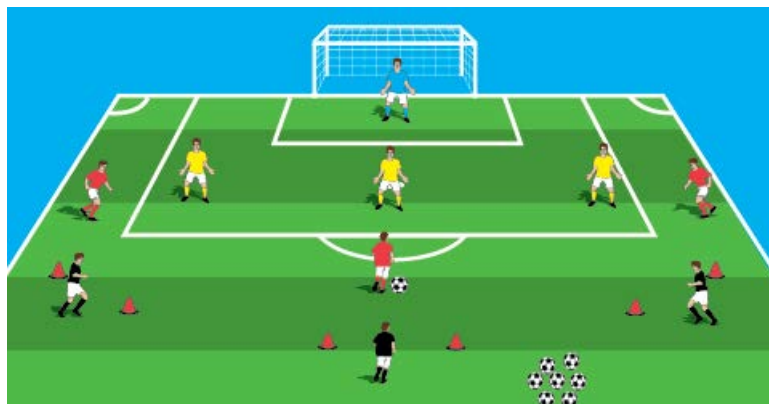
COACHING POINTS

- ✓ Work on the central midfielders positioning behind the ball. The two central midfielders are always reacting to the central attacker. Weak side always shifts up and the ball side always supports underneath the ball.
- ✓ The holding midfielder is known as the 'linking player'. They link possession from the defense to the attacking players, but they also control the flow of the play from one side of the field to the other. They should be quick 1-2 touch players and should not look to dribble forward. As we progress in teaching them the system on a larger scale they will work on rotating and shifting within the triangle. First, make sure they understand their roles and positioning before you throw too much at them.
- ✓ You can begin with subtle changes and switching positions with the central attacker and weak side central midfielder. In a situation where the central attacker shifts wide to get the ball and the weak side central midfielder shifts up to take their space, the central attacker becomes a central midfielder and the other two midfielders should adjust their positions to keep the triangle.

Formational Training- As the second half of their season approaches you should start to switch their training to a more 11v11 format to get them ready for the transition to the bigger game. This is where they should be exposed to full field training and formational training for the 1-4-3-3. If you have done this properly, players already have an understanding of their roles and responsibilities and they should be able to adjust quickly to learning the larger game at 11v11. It is important to state that everything links together in training from u9 until u12 up to this point. We spent the first part of their development building a strong technical foundation and

the second part of their development building a stronger understanding of positional and formational responsibilities. This is the critical age where players now learn how everything interconnects.

- **Training 3 Forwards (3v3v3)**- This is where you try to build that attacking instinct into your forwards. Have them play 3v3 with 3 neutral players waiting between three separate gates. The game creates three separate 1v1's and you should encourage players to attack those 1v1 situations and not be so fast to give up possession. If the attackers shoot and miss the goal or shoot and score, the coach starts the play again with another ball into the same three forwards. If the defending three players win possession have them try to pass to one of the three players between the gates. If they are successful, then those three players step in to attack and the three players who were attacking now become defenders. The three defenders then take up position between the gates quickly. The exercise is continuous. As a warning, the game is very demanding on fitness and players will tire quickly. Be sure to give them breaks to recover and get water. This is a great time to give your coaching points.



COACHING POINTS

- ✓ This exercise is designed for all of your attacking players (9) and your GKs. Make sure that when a player receives the ball that you urge them to attack as quickly as they can. They shouldn't slow down when attacking (which is the tendency when they get tired or are unsure).
- ✓ Condition the wide attackers to attack the space wide and the other players to work on framing the box every time (central attacker near post to eliminate the GK and the weak side to come in towards the back post).
- ✓ If a forward cuts inside, work on the central attacker making a bending run behind as an option. The player with possession should look at their three options (play the central attacker, play a diagonal ball to the weak side or shoot).

- **5v5 Plus 3-** In this exercise the play is 5v5 with three supporting players with possession. Two of the supporting players are positioned on one end of the grid and should be your central defenders. On the other end you have one supporting player and it should be your central attacker. The grid size should be between 20x30 and 25x40, depending upon the age and skill level of the players. When they first start make the grid bigger and shrink it down as they are more successful and become more confident. The two supporting defenders on the line can enter with possession when there is space for them to enter, but once they release the ball they should recover to their starting position as quickly as possible. The same with the central attacker, they can also enter the grid with possession, but once they release the ball they must quickly recover to their starting position.



COACHING POINTS

- ✓ When working with the two central defenders, make sure that when one has possession the other drops back and underneath slightly (as shown) to support the central defender with possession. They also do this to protect the middle in case possession is lost.
- ✓ The central attacker should always be shifting ball side and looking to open up a passing lane to receive the ball from whoever has possession.
- ✓ The supporting players can be defended, but they should be looking to attack space when possible and with possession. If they have the ball and there is no pressure, they should attack into the grid and quickly forward until they start receiving pressure. They then release the ball and quickly recover.

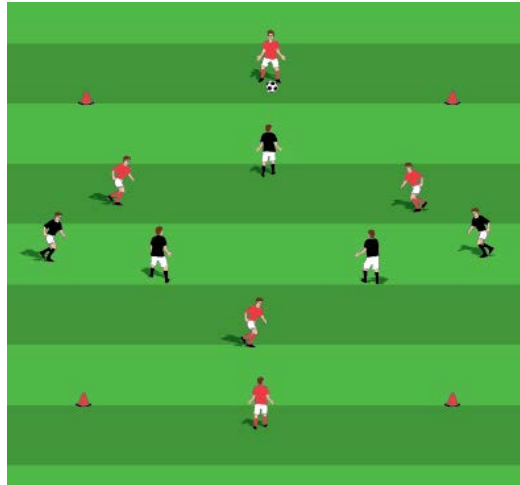
- **11v8 to Wide Targets w/ Large Goals and GKs-** This might be useful when combining two teams as you can incorporate as many as 23 players at one time. You can also reduce the numbers down to 16 to accommodate just one team for this exercise. The exercise works on setting up your team in their 1-4-3-3 formation attacking one goal and defending another goal. Both large goals have GKs in them. Defending the 11 players would be 8 players set up in a 3-2-3 formation (you can adjust to a 2-1-2 formation to start, if you need to build confidence and because of numbers. On the outside at midfield would be two supporting players for the attacking team only. You can reduce your numbers by switching these neutral players with the wing defenders on the attacking team. The ball begins with one of the neutral players as they pass the ball into the attacking team. They must keep possession and look to play the ball to the other neutral player on the opposite side of the field. Once they do this and the ball is played back in they have 10 seconds to attack the goal. This will teach them the difference between possession speed and penetrating speed or attacking speed. If they are not able to attack in the 10 seconds, then they must start over by passing the ball to both neutral players. If the defending teams wins possession they can attack either goal. The 11 players must immediately look to win possession back as soon as possible.



COACHING POINTS

- ✓ Emphasize to the players that they must protect possession and not force passes. If the neutral isn't open, they should protect until they are.
- ✓ Once the ball re-enters after coming in from the neutral they should look to attack at speed. Remind them of their options in possession or they will only look wide.
- ✓ There should be a sense of urgency when they lose possession. They should get pressure on the ball immediately and take away options quickly.

- **Training the Triangle Midfield-** In a grid that is between 20x20 and 25x25 (grid size depends on the skill level of the players) have 3v3 inside and supporting players around the outside. One team of three plays to a supporting player on the lines north and south only. The other three plays to a supporting player on the lines east and west only. If you need to include more players, then place more supporting players on the lines (up to three per line for a total of 12 supporting players).



COACHING POINTS

- ✓ Work with the triangle to keep their shape and to move and support one another in relation to the ball. This is a more advanced training exercise, so be patient with them as you start trying to implement this.
- ✓ Condition the players to communicate with one another and to always be moving and shifting.
- ✓ It is important in the triangle that you always have someone high as an option forward. Make sure that the first thing that happens is you have a high option.
- ✓ In defending, the closest player needs to get pressure on the ball to keep them wide. This is called getting a tip on the ball. The other two players should get their positioning behind the pressing player and be at a distance 10 yards on average.
- ✓ Defending is zonal/ man-to-man. It starts zonal, but if a player positions themselves in a position in front or to the side and is an option, then the triangle midfield player would need to step to mark them.

The objective is to play quickly into the target on the other line. This player represents the central attacker. When open, they should play it quickly.

PSYCHOLOGICAL DEVELOPMENT



Players at this age want to learn and have a tendency to learn by repeating the act they see. If you perform it well and demonstrate it clearly and properly, they will learn the skill for a lifetime. The important thing to understand is that they are easily distracted and easily intimidated in an atmosphere that is not open and creative. The environment that you create must be positive and supportive and strongly emphasizes fun. Don't be afraid to have a personality with the players and to laugh with act goofy at times. They will be more relaxed and open to what you are teaching them and will pick up what you are trying to teach them faster. It requires a lot of patience and energy to coach this way, but it is well worth it!

The style of coaching you would implement with this age level is ***DIRECTED COACHING***. This method is always recommended when working with younger players. There are five criteria to keep in mind when using a ***Directed Learning*** Strategy:

- 6) **Organize Your Sessions-** Your sessions should be laid out and set for the players before they arrive. I would suggest a coach be at the session to set up at least 20-30 minutes in advance. Players should arrive 10 minutes prior to the session and start performing their pre-training activities. Once the start time for your session arrives, then you begin right on time.
- 7) **Structure-** Sessions should be structured and organized so that they are easy for players to see and understand and easy for you to move from one exercise to the next. Session layout should not be too complicated and too busy with a lot of cones or materials. Too much is too much at this level.
- 8) **Simple Information-** Remember the audience you have. You may understand what you are talking about, but young players may not. Make sure to think about what you are saying and to keep your information simple and jargon-free.
- 9) **Start Easy and Progress to Difficult-** Make it easy to start so that your players have a lot of success. They want to feel success and so do you. They will not care how the initial success is achieved, so make sure to start your exercises so they will achieve success. As they progress you can quickly add pressure through opposing players, restricting time or limiting space.
- 10) **Timed Activities-** Your session length is limited to usually 75-90 minutes each. Be sure when you plan your sessions to time how long you want each activity to last. Don't feel like you have to be restricted to those times as sometimes you need to slow down, break something down, or progress quicker. These are all okay. You time your session

so that you create a natural flow and you know where you want to go from one exercise to the next. It gives you the ability to look at your session as you get into it and to decide when you need to move on.

There are four qualities that every coach should have when they are coaching younger players. Someone who coaches younger players and is successful at it is an art. Not everyone can do it. I will admit that I am not that coach. I am better with older players, which is understandable as I have been a college coach for more than 20 years and a Director at the youth level off and on for 20 years as well. These are the qualities you should look for when selecting coaches to coach younger players:

- 5) **Appearance-** I look at coach as a profession, whether a coach is doing this voluntarily or as a part time job. It is important that the coach look the part. They should be dressed appropriately. If it is a male coach, then their facial hair should be either trimmed or they should be clean-shaven. Hair should be kept well, or they should be wearing a club cap or soccer cap of some sort that is soil-free. Proper attire of a club shirt with soccer shorts, track or warm-ups pants should be worn.
- 6) **Approachable-** Players should feel comfortable approaching and talking to their coach. This would be the same with parents approaching the coach. I will stress, though, that it is the responsibility of the coach to set boundaries when it comes to parents approaching them. There is a right place and a right time to do this, and this needs to be properly clarified and explained by the coach in their initial meeting. Failure to do so will end up creating a much bigger problem for the coach later on.
- 7) **Positive Environment-** It is up to the coach to create an environment that is positive and supportive of the players. They should want to come to training. They should enjoy being at training. They should look forward to the next training session when it is over. They should feel challenged and that they learned something in the session. It is always a good idea to ask the players at the end of the session what you worked on to see if they understood what you were trying to teach them.
- 8) **Energy-** The coach who works with younger players really needs to have a lot of energy. Kids will always feed off the coach. If the coach has energy, the players will have energy. Keep in mind that the coach needs to have energy that is controlled and tempered and not unfocused and unstructured. The energy needs to have a focus and purpose.

Remember that **Directed Learning** is a style of teaching that has is structured by the coach. They control the environment and direct what the players are learning. They help the players to stay focused and to stay on task with the purpose of the session. This is where you will find the greatest success in learning for players at this age.

PHYSIOLOGICAL DEVELOPMENT



Making players run at this age is a waste of time. You should never be looking to train at this age for fitness or strength. The only areas of this type of development you might need to address would be psychomotricity or basic motor skills (i.e. balance and coordination). This might mean creating some exercises where you teach them to bound, jump, land, roll, etc. This never used to be the case as when kids were this age they used to be outside running and jumping all of the time. This is no longer the case as video games, television and technology has dominated the younger ages now. There may be situations where kids might need to be taught these skills. If so, be prepared to create a session that works on these that is fun and inspiring for the players.

PERIODIZATION (PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT)

Periodization is the process by which you train and develop your players. That is a simple way of explaining it. It is a systematic approach to how you train your players technically, tactically, psychologically, and physiologically. The key component of the definition that defines this term is how you balance the volume of content and work rate against the fatigue factor of the player. At the younger ages of Under 11 and Under 12 your content will be more technique driven while the physiological component will be nil. This doesn't mean that the training sessions your coaches will run won't have some elements of fitness included as soccer is a sport that naturally includes fitness. It's just that fitness won't be a content-driven component of the training at these ages.

To begin, you need to be able to develop a very clear picture of what a player will look like at the conclusion of this program. Imagine the perfect player who is just finishing at the Under 12 Age Level. What do they look like technically? What do they look like tactically? How are they psychologically? How are they physiologically. Build that perfect image of the player and then develop your Player Evaluations to match this perfect player. Once you've completed this take that perfect image and look at where they would be when they started at the Under 11 Age Level. It is important to know where they are when they start and where you want them to be when they have completed the full 9v9 Program. Now that you have these two images start looking at breaking it down using the Periodization Model.

Macrocycle- There will be two complete cycles at the 9v9 Level (Under 11 and Under 12). These are two complete years of development and they fall under Macrocycle.

- **Under 11 (Cycle #1)-** You know where the player will be when they first start at the 9v9 Age Level. You developed that to start. You also know where you want them to be when they complete the 9v9 Development Program you put together. Look at what you want them to learn and focus on in this first cycle. It is okay to use a brainstorming model where you have everything in front of you and start listing under each what they need to learn to match up to that perfect image. Always start big and work on bringing the model down to its smallest component.
- **Under 12 (Cycle #2)-** Be sure to plan both cycles at the same time so that nothing gets missed. You have the starting point and the ending point with the image of the perfect player and where they should be when they complete the 9v9 Program. Be sure to map

out with as much detail as possible for each year what they need to learn. The second year will always start to integrate more complex components of your development plan.

Mesocycle- Once you have the complete images of what a player will look like when they start and what they should look like after completing the 9v9 Development Program you would then complete the Macrocycles listing what they need to learn in the two cycles. Now you advance to the Mesocycles and start breaking down each cycle into even more detail. Each of the Macrocycles has two separate Mesocycles (Fall and Spring) for a total of four complete Mesocycles.

- **Mesocycle Year 1 (Fall)-** Take your list of everything you want completed in the first Macrocycle and divide it into two parts (Your Mesocycles). Look at what needs to be done first and be sure to prioritize your list that way.
- **Mesocycle Year 1 (Spring)-** Be sure to create your Mesocycles at the same time as it is easier and will be more complete. It is okay to develop it, leave it, then come back to review and amend. As you are creating the first year be sure to list everything that needs to be covered.
- **Mesocycle Year 2 (Fall)-** Once you've completed the first Mesocycle for Year 1, then you can start looking at Year 2. Do both at the same time as it will be easier and your development plan more complete. Divide your second year of the development plan into two equal parts. Be sure to prioritize what needs to be developed first and what is most important in the development plan.
- **Mesocycle Year 2 (Spring)-** Complete your four Mesocycles and make sure that everything you had originally planned for that perfect player is being covered in your cycles. Be sure to include ample time for players to review their development as you need to continue to re-affirm their development by constantly reviewing what they've learned.

Microcycle- This is the smallest and most focused of the three cycles. At the younger ages of Under 11 and Under 12 this process will be easier. As the training and development gets more complex so will how you plan and organize your Periodization Model. At the Microcycle Level you would have roughly 16-20 weeks. Each week represents just 1 Microcycle. This is where you will get very specific in what is trained when. The key ingredient now has to include volume. You can't constantly bombard players with very specific technical drills to address a technical component of the player. It has to be balanced with small-sided play, match-related play and situations, etc. There is a balance to how you implement your Microcycles to make

sure you are not over-structuring your player development. An element of FUN must always be present in the development process of Under 11 and Under 12 Players.

SUMMARY

This book series is meant to help you organize your club and to help focus the development of your teams. It is not meant as something you would follow verbatim. It is meant to help you to develop and plan your curriculum. This book acts as an overview of development and how to structure it. It is up to you as a Director to put in the details of how you will train your players technically, tactically, what personality and approach from your coaches when training and developing players.

I can tell you what is important to me as far as development is concerned, but what is important here is what do you find important. You have to make the decision of how things will look and be structured in training. The exercises in this guide are meant to give you examples and a reference point for you to begin to develop a comprehensive plan for player development. A guide is a guide and is not an actual plan. That is what you will provide with your background and expertise as a director. You need to decide what is important when it comes to technical development. Will it be to focus on the player and his or her ability to control the ball individually. Maybe your focus is to develop the first touch in receiving. You may want to focus on dribbling and ball manipulation skills. These are all decisions that you will make and then expect of your coaches. The same goes with tactics. You may want to progress farther than what I have outlined in this book. Maybe you want to include early fundamentals of positional and formational training and feel the players you have are advanced enough to incorporate that into their development.

You have an awesome job and responsibility as a Director, one that I have taken on many times. It is important that you are organized, have a direction, get the Executive Board of your club to buy in to your philosophy and approach, and then stick to it! You have as a Director an amazing opportunity to influence the lives of so many. Embrace that challenge and respect that authority that you have. Using some Psychology, YOU CAN DO THIS! Good Luck!

PLANNING FORMS AND EVALUATIONS

- 1) **Player Evaluation-** The player evaluation included in this series is a generic one I have created after looking at different club evaluation forms across the country. This evaluation incorporates all four development areas and allows you to rate players in a uniformed and unbiased way. It is important to have some form of evaluation given back to the players with an area that focuses on improvement. One form I typically use actually focuses on short term and long-term development. My definition of short term would be within the next six months of training. Long term would be beyond those six months. Either way, the form or method you use to evaluate players needs to be consistent across the board and needs to be used by everyone at every level. It won't be effective if you have a handful of coaches that use the evaluation tool and a handful that do not. Consistency is a key to your success.
- 2) **Coach Evaluation-** Just as it is important to provide feedback to the players, it is also important to provide development feedback to the coaches. Remember, your main job is to coach the coaches so they coach the players better. You have a significant influence as a director and need to be involved. Make sure your feedback is also consistent. I would suggest that you evaluate every coach (assistant coaches included) every six months. The first evaluation is done to review the first half of their performance and to look at the next six months on what needs to improve. Your second evaluation is used as a final evaluation of the entire year and to be used to determine re-appointment.
- 3) **Coach and Team Evaluation-** This is a form I like to use when evaluating a session being run by a coach. It could also be used to evaluate a scrimmage or game and the performance of the team and/or coach in that scrimmage or game. It is helpful to do this a couple of times for each team and to use these when doing your evaluations.
- 4) **Team Pre-Planning Sheet-** This is a form I put together for each coach to organize and plan their team for the year. I believe that this process needs to involve the Director as it is important that all of our teams try to attend the same events. It may not always be possible to do this, but if the Director is involved with the coach in the planning and organization, then they can guide and assist the coach in planning the team for the year.



PLAYER EVALUATION

UNDER 9 and UNDER 10 AGE LEVEL

PLAYER NAME:	TEAM COACH/ EVALUATOR:
---------------------	-------------------------------

TECHNICAL

Preparation	1	2	3	4	5
Skill (1 st Touch)	1	2	3	4	5
Skill (Technique)	1	2	3	4	5
Technical Speed	1	2	3	4	5
Dribbling/ 1v1	1	2	3	4	5

TACTICAL

Positioning	1	2	3	4	5
Defending (Individual)	1	2	3	4	5
Attacking	1	2	3	4	5
Decision-Making	1	2	3	4	5
Communication	1	2	3	4	5

OVERALL SCORE: _____

OVERALL SCORE: _____

PSYCHOLOGICAL

Attitude	1	2	3	4	5
Composure	1	2	3	4	5
Concentration	1	2	3	4	5
Competitiveness	1	2	3	4	5
Focus	1	2	3	4	5

PHYSIOLOGICAL

Speed	1	2	3	4	5
Endurance	1	2	3	4	5
Agility	1	2	3	4	5
Strength	1	2	3	4	5
Quickness	1	2	3	4	5

OVERALL SCORE: _____

OVERALL SCORE: _____

IMPROVEMENT PLAN



GOALKEEPER EVALUATION

UNDER 9 and UNDER 10 AGE LEVEL

PLAYER NAME:	TEAM COACH/ EVALUATOR:
---------------------	-------------------------------

TECHNICAL

Starting Pos. (Shots)	1	2	3	4	5
Starting Pos. (Crosses)	1	2	3	4	5
Cutting Down Angles	1	2	3	4	5
Footwork (w/o Ball)	1	2	3	4	5
Footwork (Possession)	1	2	3	4	5
Core (Footwork)	1	2	3	4	5
Standing up to Shots	1	2	3	4	5
Handling Shots	1	2	3	4	5
Handling Crosses	1	2	3	4	5

OVERALL SCORE: _____

TACTICAL

Diving	1	2	3	4	5
Dist. (Hand)	1	2	3	4	5
Dist. (Foot)	1	2	3	4	5
Supp. Play	1	2	3	4	5
Comm.	1	2	3	4	5
Conf./ Pres.	1	2	3	4	5
Start Pos.	1	2	3	4	5
Command	1	2	3	4	5
Org. Def.	1	2	3	4	5

OVERALL SCORE: _____

PSYCHOLOGICAL

Speed	1	2	3	4	5
Agility	1	2	3	4	5
Strength	1	2	3	4	5
Aggression	1	2	3	4	5
Balance	1	2	3	4	5
Vertical Jump	1	2	3	4	5

OVERALL SCORE: _____

PHYSIOLOGICAL

Toughness	1	2	3	4	5
Determ.	1	2	3	4	5
Concent.	1	2	3	4	5
Insight	1	2	3	4	5
Confidence	1	2	3	4	5
Leadership	1	2	3	4	5

OVERALL SCORE: _____

IMPROVEMENT PLAN

RATING SYSTEM

1- Needs Improvement 2- Developing Below Age Level 3- Developing at Age Level 4- Developing Above Age Level 5- Excelling at Age Level

- 1- Player is struggling at age level to develop and maintain the necessary skills to remain competitive.
- 2- Player has shown improvement and is developing, but their development is still below where they should be at their current competitive age level.
- 3- Player has shown improvement and is developing at current competitive level and age.
- 4- Player is developing above their current competitive level and age.
- 5- Player is excelling at their current competitive level and age. They have shown that they have a significant impact at their current competitive level and age.



COACH EVALUATION SHEET

Note: Coaching Evaluations are confidential and will only be viewed by the Director, Coach, and Executive Director of the Club. Evaluations are NOT to be shared with anyone else without written permission of the Coach and Executive Director. Evaluations will be kept on file at the Club Office.

TEAM:	COACH:
SEASON:	ASST. COACH:
EVALUATOR:	DATE:

Rating System: 1- Needs Improvement 2- Meets Standards 3- Above Standards 4- Excels at Standard

PRACTICE/GAME ORGANIZATION	1	2	3	4
The coach is well-prepared and organized (Session is set up and ready for players prior to the session).				
The coach creates sessions that are not too complicated or too simple and are balanced for the age level and skill.				
The coach has the session pre-planned and is able to articulate the session clearly prior to the start of the session.				
The coach displays good sportsmanship and sideline behavior balancing winning vs. losing.				
The coach provides playing and training opportunities for all (Equal Playing Time is NOT a Guarantee in Comp. Soccer).				
Encourages players to respect opponents, teammates, game officials, and to play fair.				
Is in control of the team and his/her emotions in all situations.				
Players are prepared and well-informed about all exercises and drills.				
Players are prepared for scrimmages/games/game related activities.				

PLAYER DEVELOPMENT	1	2	3	4
The coach teaches age appropriate skills and tactics.				
The coach makes appropriate coaching points related to the exercise/drill.				
The coach stays in an exercise an appropriate amount of time (Progresses, Remains, or breaks it down as needed)				
The coach treats all players equally and with respect being concerned about everyone's individual development.				
The coach provides corrective feedback in a constructive and positive manner.				
The coach remains focused on the session and is not distracted when the session begins.				
The coach effectively communicates with the players to eliminate confusion and frustration.				
The session design has exercises and drills that flow from one to the next, make sense, and focus on the session topic.				
The exercises and drills are age appropriate and are structured correctly (The right size and shape for the players).				
The players show improvement in the session topic throughout the session.				

COACHING STYLE	1	2	3	4
The coach has a direct and honest style when dealing with players and parents.				
The coach is always sensitive to the self-esteem of the player and in how they interact with them.				
The coach demonstrates that they are patient and look to encourage players.				

The coach has a positive and supportive attitude with players and parents.				
The coach presents themselves as a positive role model for the players and parents.				
The coach is able to resolve any player or parent issues regarding behavior, playing time, etc.				
The coach represents themselves as being approachable to the players and parents.				
The coach always represents the club and themselves in a professional manner (i.e. attire, attitude, conduct, etc.).				

OVERALL	1	2	3	4
The coach displays an ability to properly teach technical skills at age appropriate levels.				
The coach displays an ability to properly teach tactical concepts at age appropriate levels.				
The coach has the ability to make the overall soccer experience for the players a positive and productive one.				
The objectives of the session as it pertained to the topic selected by the coach were achieved.				



COMMENTS

OVERALL RATING

OVERALL	1	2	3	4
Technical Level of the Coach				
Tactical Level of the Coach				
Ability to Teach Psychological Concepts				
Ability to Teach Physiological Concepts				
Professional Appearance/Mannerisms of the Coach				
Confidence Level of the Coach to Teach				
Ability of the Coach to Communicate Effectively				

License Level:

Overall Rating of the Coach				
------------------------------------	--	--	--	--

EVALUATION REVIEW

Date of Evaluation:

Coach Signature:	Date:
Director Signature:	Date:
Executive Director Signature:	Date:



COACH: _____ TEAM: _____

DATE OF SESSION: _____ LOCATION: _____

RATING SYSTEM:

- 1- Needs Improvement 2- Satisfactory 3- Above Average 4- Coach Excels in This Area

<u>TEAM EVALUATION</u>	<u>COACH EVALUATION</u>
<p>WARM-UP (Explanation)</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>Type: _____ Rating: _____</p> <p>Length: _____ Rating: _____</p> <p>Player Focus: _____ Rating: _____</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Total: _____</p>	<p>TECHNICAL KNOWLEDGE</p> <p>Understanding of how to teach technique Rating: _____</p> <p>Properly able to demonstrate technique Rating: _____</p> <p>Recognizes/Corrects technique Rating: _____</p> <p>Gives ample reps/opp. to practice tech. Rating: _____</p> <p>Able to vary technical training Rating: _____</p> <p>Technical training is fun/appropriate Rating: _____</p> <p>Gives continuous feedback Rating: _____</p> <p>Every player w/ ball or at least 2 to 1 Rating: _____</p>
<p>TECHNICAL WARM-UP (Explanation)</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>Type: _____ Rating: _____</p> <p>Length: _____ Rating: _____</p> <p>Player Focus: _____ Rating: _____</p>	<p>TACTICAL UNDERSTANDING</p> <p>Understands the game tactically Rating: _____</p> <p>Understands how to teach tactics Rating: _____</p> <p>Understands when to teach/correct Rating: _____</p> <p>Gives ample opp. For players to practice Rating: _____</p> <p>Coach is able to effectively demonstrate Rating: _____</p> <p>Able to vary tactical training Rating: _____</p> <p>Tactical training engages the players Rating: _____</p> <p>Coach gives ample and proper feedback Rating: _____</p> <p>Uses Stop/Correct/Repeat Rating: _____</p> <p>Breaks down and simplifies tactics Rating: _____</p>
<p>SESSION FOCUS (Explanation)</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>Type: _____ Rating: _____</p> <p>Length: _____ Rating: _____</p> <p>Player Focus: _____ Rating: _____</p>	<p>PERSONALITY and PRESENCE</p> <p>Is supportive and encouraging Rating: _____</p> <p>Treats players fairly and equally Rating: _____</p> <p>Coach enjoys what they are doing Rating: _____</p> <p>Has a professional appearance/manner Rating: _____</p> <p>Has a good rapport with players Rating: _____</p> <p>Exhibits patience and flexibility Rating: _____</p> <p>Shows concern/cares about the players Rating: _____</p> <p>Is active and involved in session Rating: _____</p> <p>Controls the training environment Rating: _____</p>
<p>SESSION PROGRESSION (Explanation)</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>Type: _____ Rating: _____</p> <p>Length: _____ Rating: _____</p> <p>Player Focus: _____ Rating: _____</p>	<p>ORGANIZATION and COMMUNICATION</p> <p>Training environment is set up early Rating: _____</p> <p>Follows a training plan Rating: _____</p> <p>Available to players and parents Rating: _____</p> <p>Provides clear and direct feedback Rating: _____</p> <p>Coordinates effectively with Team MGR Rating: _____</p> <p>Comm. Is constructive and not negative Rating: _____</p> <p>Open to feedback/Listens to players Rating: _____</p>
<p>SCRIMMAGE/SMALL SIDED/MATCH PLAY (Explanation)</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>Type: _____ Rating: _____</p> <p>Length: _____ Rating: _____</p>	



PRE-PLANNING TEAM SHEET

TEAM INFORMATION

TEAM NAME: _____ AGE _____

GROUP: _____ GENDER: _____

HEAD COACH: _____

CELL PHONE: _____

EMAIL: _____

COACHING CREDENTIALS: _____

ASST. COACH: _____

CELL PHONE: _____

EMAIL: _____

COACHING CREDENTIALS: _____

ASST. COACH: _____

CELL PHONE: _____

EMAIL: _____

COACHING

CREDENTIALS: _____

TEAM MANAGER: _____

CELL PHONE: _____

EMAIL: _____

LEAGUE INFORMATION

PROJECTED PRIMARY LEAGUE: _____

SECONDARY LEAGUE (If Applicable): _____

TRAINING INFORMATION

LOCATION: _____

DAYS: _____

SUMMER PLANNING

TEAM CAMP: _____

ID CAMPS: _____

SOCCER CAMPS: _____

FALL TOURNAMENTS

TOURNAMENT #1: _____

DATES: _____

TOURNAMENT #2: _____

DATES: _____

TOURNAMENT #3: _____

DATES: _____

SPRING TOURNAMENTS

TOURNAMENT #1: _____

DATES: _____

TOURNAMENT #2: _____

DATES: _____

TOURNAMENT #3: _____

DATES: _____

COMMUNITY SERVICE

FALL EVENT: _____

SPRING EVENT: _____

HEAD COACH (Signature): _____

DATE: _____

GIRLS DIRECTOR (Signature): _____

DATE: _____