

COACHING FOCUS IN PLAYER DEVELOPMENT

Marshalltown Area Soccer Club

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The U11 & U12 Player;

The coach of this period of development, ages ten, eleven and twelve (the second phase of the “golden age” of learning), should focus primarily on motivating the players to refine their technique to the point that it is productive at game speed.

Technical Focus: Improving and refining player’s technical base (using both feet and all appropriate surfaces) through continuous technical repetition is still the primary focus at this age. Practices should, throughout the season, encompass the development of all techniques (dribbling, passing, shooting, heading, talking, receiving) and the application of technique, providing an environment that challenges the players decision making within the game.

Tactical Focus: Various basic tactical concepts can be introduced. These include support play (width, length and depth of the field to support teammates) and formal combination plays including wall passes, overlaps, double passes and takeovers. Furthermore, general attacking, defending positional play and role concepts can be developed. Attacking players trying to open and stretch the field to create more space and time for themselves and other teammates. Defending concepts should involve trying to limit the amount of time, space available for attackers by pressuring and staying compact.

Physiological Focus: Both boys and girls at this age will be continuing to go through diverse growth spurts. Consequently, this will have an impact on the player’s technique, with often awkward period. Furthermore, an increase in the player’s physical strength will have an impact on the player’s range of technique (for example an increases in distance for passing and shooting).

Psychological Focus: Players at this age are more aware and realize that winning and losing are directly tied to the player’s ability and effort, and that in order to be successful player’s skills must be refined. Again, players continue to compare their personal identity with their perceived ability and thus it is imperative that the feedback from peers, parents and coaches is consistently positive. Players are still easily psychologically bruised so coaches must be positive in their delivery of feedback.

Game Focus: Small sided games include 1v1 up to 8v 8. Possibly at the age of 12 some 11 versus 11 games may help for the approaching transition to the full