

COACHING RESOURCES

Teaching Soccer – ACTION

Activity must be one of your main goals when dealing with young players. You must understand that players come to practice to play SOCCER. Therefore, any activity that does not involve playing soccer may become disruptive and counter-productive.

Clarify your practice session rules and expectations through individual and team discussions. That is, have the team decide what is appropriate and inappropriate behavior. It is actually fun to have them vote on their own practice session rules. Then, you must act firmly, fairly, consistently and as a matter of fact, when their actions go against their own established rules.

Teach less! When players and balls are moving, soccer learning is taking place. When players and balls stop moving, soccer learning stops! Ask yourself 'does it happen in the game (ie-drills)'? If the answer is YES, then do it in practice. If the answer is NO, then don't do it in practice. Keep training as 'match oriented' as possible. Remember, they come to you to play SOCCER!

Interest in playing soccer needs to be developed. You may be faced with players who are not interested in playing our wonderful game and you must adjust accordingly. Give appropriate attention to the disinterested players but not at the expense of the rest of the team. Then, make the practices so much FUN that the disinterested player may want to join. Remember that when you are working with your players you must be helpful, understanding and as patient as you are with your own children when they are learning other skills in life.

Organize the practice session in such a manner that it becomes apparent that it is a rehearsal for the game day routine. This can only be accomplished through a consistent, sequential routine that allows your players to learn what is expected. It is wise to avoid variety. If they are introduced to something different at each practice session, this will lead to some confusion, and confusion can lead to disinterest. This may also lead to lack of consistency in game situations, based on lack of skill repetition in training.

No laps, No lines, No lectures! Running around the field may be considered punishment. They already know how to stand in a line. It is a fact that their attention span is less than 15 seconds. You must create a practice environment that minimizes listening/lecture time and maximizes touches with the ball and playing time. In other words, allow them to play the game of soccer which forces them to make decisions and learn on their own. Allow them to experiment and fail their way to success!

Typical 9 Step Practice Routine

- Begin Practice by bringing players together
- Warm-Up by stretching (5-10 min)
- Demonstrate Theme, then let each player demonstrate
- Team up in 1 v 1 and practice theme
- Team up in 2 v 2 and continue practice theme; another demonstration may be needed
- Play small sided games – 4v4
- Scrimmage with all players involved
- Cool Down by stretching
- End Practice by review, compliment and possibly talk about next practice