

ONTARIO SOCCER ASSOCIATION

Grassroots Soccer - Provincial Curriculum

FOR COACHES OF LEARN TO TRAIN PLAYERS

LEARN TO TRAIN



L.T.P.D.
long term player development



VERSION 1



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Introduction

This LTPD resource has been created for Districts, Academies, Clubs and coaches to follow a provincial coaching curriculum that is physical literacy stage-specific for players from u4 to u12.

The information within this document will allow members to create programs and coaching sessions that are appropriate for the development stage of each player. By implementing the curriculum, along with good coaching methodology, players will benefit from and enjoy practice sessions more. All sessions will focus on player development in a low stress, supportive, positive, fun filled and safe environment. By coaches creating this environment the players will be excited to learn and be anxious to return.

In general terms a curriculum consists of everything that promotes technical, personal, social and physical development of the players. In addition to activity examples and sample session plans it includes approaches to teaching and learning. The curriculum helps to remove the 'guess work' in choosing developmentally appropriate content and enables coaches to work on their methodology and coaching style.

Coaching Philosophy

Coaches of players in the Physical Literacy stream will benefit from a sound, well thought out coaching philosophy. We would strongly recommend that coaches follow a "player centred" coaching philosophy. Player centred coaching allows the player to make decisions within the practice session and/or game. The coach has to be confident enough to empower his/her players to become assured decision-makers during their session. As soccer is a game based on making numerous decisions it's vitally important that the coach allows the young player to practice and develop the decisions that they make. Initially many young players decisions will be unsuccessful but only through support, time and patience, will our young players develop the skill to make better decisions.

“To apply the future game philosophy we need coaches who can develop environments in which players are encouraged to be creative and expressive without the fear of failure.”

Sir Trevor Brooking
FA Director of Football Development

Physical Literacy Complimentary Sports

Sports can be classified as early or late specialization, and the seven stages of LTPD are based on this concept. Acrobatic and artistic sports such as figure skating, diving and gymnastics are early specialisation sports while other sports such as basketball and soccer are late specialization sports.

Because soccer is a late specialization sport, LTPD actively discourages early specialization (i.e. prior to the age of 10 years) since premature specialization contributes to imbalanced physical development, overuse injuries, early

burn out and inadequate development of movement and sport skills.

The first three stages of LTPD, Active Start, FUNdamentals and Learn to Train, encourages physical literacy for all players, regardless of their abilities or disabilities. The diagram below shows examples of sports and activities (not exhaustive) that are complimentary and will support physical literacy and soccer. Soccer volume can increase but participation in other sports is important to all round balanced athletic development.

THE CANADIAN PHYSICAL LITERACY FAB FIVE



Promoting full physical literacy by learning fundamental movement skills and fundamental sports skills on land, in the air, in water, on ice and on snow.

COMPLIMENTARY ACTIVITIES FOR LEARNING TO TRAIN



Each category has a unique and collective impact on all-around development and it is important that children ages 4-12 sample activities from all three.

Four Corner Development Model

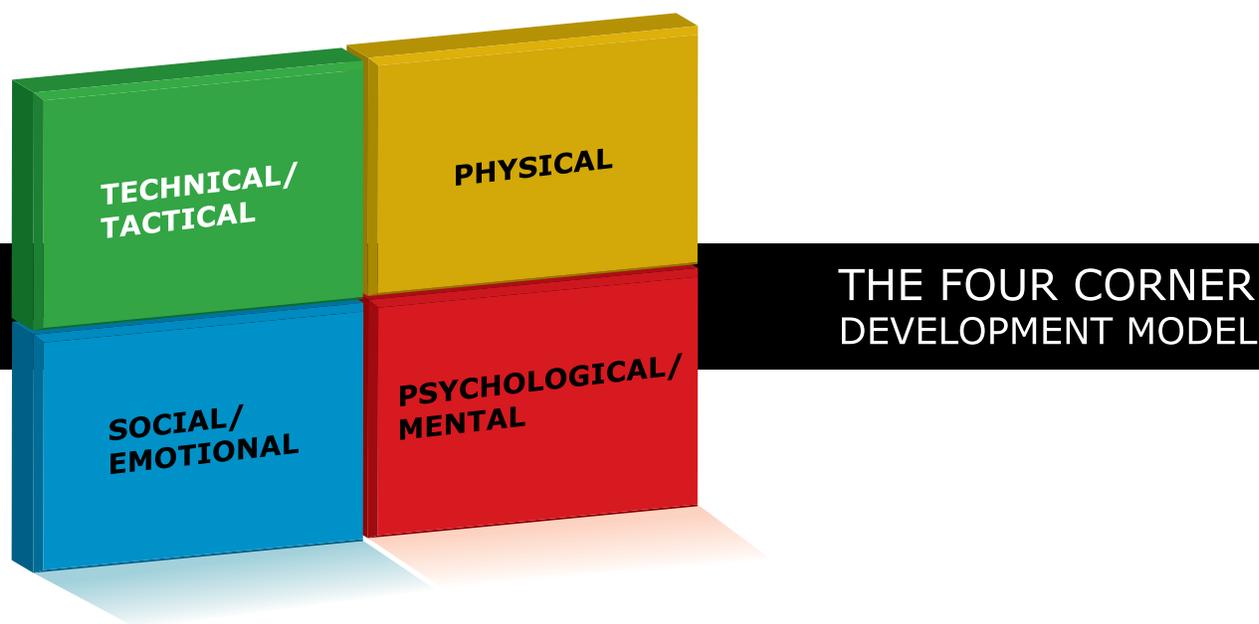
The Four Corner LTPD model consists of technical, psychological, physical and social/emotional components. Each corner of the model reflects a wide aspect of a player's development that has to be considered. The gradual progressive development of players is fundamental to the enjoyment, technical competency and retention in the game. The Four Corner approach places the player at the center of the development process with soccer experiences that meet the four key needs of the player.

Although priorities will vary during the player's different ages and phases of maturity, the model provides a basic framework for coaches to work within. In addition to the four main components, there are a number of additional 'contributions' from a wide number of people, such as parents, teachers, schools and local clubs. The model is deliberately interlinked, which means that activity in any one corner will produce a reaction throughout all aspects of the model. For example, a practice technique may impact physical balance and co-ordination while producing

increased confidence and enhanced social standing within the group. The key message to coaches is not to consider any of the programme's aspects in isolation.

As the development pathway for each individual player is unique and diverse, the needs of each player will ebb and flow in all of the 4 corners. And, whilst the need for added support for some players will be minimal, others will require much more applied and specific support.

A player's performance in practice and matches can be influenced by the following factors, nearly all of which need to be considered when forming an opinion of a player's progress and true ability: date of birth, relative to the rest of the group; body types; adolescent growth spurt in all the four corners; physical maturity; psychological maturity; social maturity; previous experience; opposition; position suitability; instructions given to the player; and recent playing activity.



The Four Corner development model is referenced throughout this resource using the colour codes found above in the diagram. Tactical information is shown using white.

TECHNICAL/TACTICAL:

Players improve by playing lots of soccer and being active in other complementary sports and activities. That said, without a skilled mix of guidance, challenge, appropriate questioning, demonstration and teaching, it's unlikely that players will reach their true potential.

TIPS FOR TECHNICAL DEVELOPMENT;

- Use the coaching activity to challenge and develop players technically. Encourage players to try new skills.
- Appropriate challenges may be set for the whole group or for individuals within the group. For example in a passing practice some players may be challenged to play one-touch passes whenever they think it's appropriate.
- When appropriate, practice activity should replicate the demands of the game, encouraging players to think and make decisions just as they would in a game. Clever practice design should allow players to repeat and re-visit elements of the game without experiencing boredom.

PHYSICAL:

To become an effective soccer player there are basic physical movement skills that need to be developed. Agility, balance, coordination, and speed (ABC'S) are all essential qualities for players; between the ages of 4-12 young players have a "window of opportunity" to develop these attributes.

Addressing the state of physical literacy of children is one of the biggest challenges we currently face in society and coaches should help communicate the benefits of physical activity and a healthy lifestyle.

TIPS FOR PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT;

- Children are not mini adults and shouldn't be subjected to running laps of the field and doing push ups.
- Through well-designed practice all coaching activities can include physical outcomes.
- A shooting practice may include a physical challenge which is realistic to the demands of the game. E.g. a defender and an attacker may have to turn and race onto a through ball before taking a shot at goal. In this way the players are working on turning, acceleration and deceleration as well as the technical elements of the exercise.
- Coaches working with young players should be aware of the key windows for physical development and which aspects of a players development can be improved and when.
- Appropriate movement skills such as tag games and activities which develop agility, balance and coordination should be encouraged through enjoyable games.
- Don't expect too much from young players too soon!

PSYCHOLOGICAL/MENTAL:

Creating learning environments that challenge players to be imaginative, creative and reflect on their performance—both during and after practice/game—is fundamental to the development of the future player. Coaches should adopt different coaching styles and methods to meet the individual needs of young players, understanding that there is more than one way for players to learn the game.

TIPS FOR PSYCHOLOGICAL DEVELOPMENT;

- Use different methods to communicate with different types of learners.
- **Visual (seeing):** tactics boards, posters, diagrams, cue and prompt cards as well as arrangements of cones on the pitch are some ways in which coaches can communicate with players visually.
- **Auditory (hearing):** As well as speaking with the players and asking questions, coaches can encourage players to discuss aspects of the game in pairs, small groups and also with the whole group. Through communication with others, players can help solve game-related problems and learn more about the game.
- **Kinaesthetic (doing):** physically 'walking through' positional arrangements and freeze-framing parts of the game can help paint pictures in the mind of the players and contribute to the understanding of the game.
- Help players learn the game and develop their decision-making skills by setting game-related problems for players to solve. For example "in this passing practice try and turn with no-touches whenever possible; try and work out when you will be able to do this and when you won't"

SOCIAL/EMOTIONAL:

Playing soccer can help children learn many life skills: cooperation, teamwork, communication and friendship are some of the benefits of joining a team and playing the game. To allow these social skills to develop, players should be allowed a safe and supportive environment and given encouragement to learn the game.

TIPS FOR SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT;

- Coaches should strive to create a positive environment which is welcoming for players both during games and training. How you treat your players is crucial to ensuring this is positive and fulfilling for the young player.
- Players should be praised and recognised for effort and endeavour as well as ability. This will highlight the process of learning and striving to get better rather than just the final outcome.
- As coaches are in a significant position of influence with their players it is important to give consideration to the type of role-model you are. What are your values and beliefs and how is this demonstrated in your behaviour?

The relationship between the coach and the players is of a significant importance. The ability of a coach to establish a rapport with the players will accelerate the learning process. Coaches should be adaptable and flexible in their coaching methods, changing to the need of the individual player.

COACHING METHODS

When planning a coaching session the coach should consider the most appropriate coaching method for the group of players that they are working with and the outcome they wish to achieve.

The “coaching methods” table below outlines a range of approaches that can be used to meet players’ individual needs. The use of coaching methods will vary due to the ever-changing process of coaching. Some of the key factors coaches should consider when planning their coaching methods are;

- The group of players/individual player the coach is working with
- The intended outcome of the practice
- The technical content of the practice

Mastery of the different coaching methods and communication styles is the mark of a gifted coach and will be an essential requirement for a coach.

CONTINUUM					
Coaching Method	Command	Question & Answer	Observation & Feedback	Guided Discovery	Trial & Error
Player/coach interventions	Coach tells and shows required solution	Coach leads with a question to gain a response from players	Coach and players observe	Coach asks a question or issues a challenge	Players &/or coach decide on a challenge
Example	“I want you to pass the ball to Rahim”	“Can you tell me who you could pass to here?”	“Let’s watch and see what happens”	“Can you show me how you could get the ball to Anna?”	“Try it for yourself...”
Description	Coach determines the outcomes in practice	Coach poses question & players offer a verbal solution	Players & coach observe & discuss feedback	Coach prompts and player offers a demonstration of their personal solution	Players are encouraged to find solutions with minimal support

General Player Characteristics of Age Appropriate Development

Stage	Age	Characteristics
Active Start	U4	Players at this age have a very short attention span, they are very easily distracted. They all want to play with their ball, the toy. There is no sense of sharing toys, especially with strangers.
	U5	There is no ability yet for team play. As sharing is still an alien concept, passing the ball is not yet comfortable for them. They are only able to understand very simple rules.
FUNDamentals	U6	Able to understand very basic coaching info like stay in the area, attack in that direction etc. Learning through trial and error. Biggest challenge is learning to control the moving ball with their feet.
	U7	Players now understand that the game's purpose is to score more goals than their opponents. Still a lot of individual play.
	U8	Players' understanding that acting with the ball purposefully will lead to success is developing. Combining basic motor skills with ball control is now encouraged.
Learn to Train	U9	Now playing on a 7v7 field the understanding of team play, direction and opponent is developing. Optimum age to work on soccer specific techniques and skills
	U10	More and more understanding and feeling for teamwork. Understanding of playing without the ball (running off the ball) develops.
	U11	Perfect mental and physical ability for developing motor skills. Preference for specific positions becomes clearer. Developing an understanding of individual roles in relation to team.
	U12	Likes to compete and compare. Socially aware, critical of own performance and that of ???others. Ideal mental and physical condition in this age group. Imitates idols.

FOR MORE DETAILED PLAYER CHARACTERISTICS SEE EACH DEVELOPMENT STAGE'S INFORMATION PAGES



Learn to Train

U9, U10, U11 & U12

DEVELOPMENT STAGE	LEARN TO TRAIN			
TECHNICAL	U9	U10	U11	U12
Dribbling	1	1	1	1
Shooting	1	1	1	1
Running with the ball	1	1	1	1
Ball control	2	1	1	1
Passing	2	1	1	1
Receiving	2	1	1	1
Heading	4	4	4	3
Shielding the ball	3	2	2	1
Crossing	3	2	2	1
Finishing	3	2	2	1
1v1 Defending	3	3	2	1
1v1 Attacking	2	1	1	1

DEVELOPMENT STAGE	LEARN TO TRAIN			
PSYCHOLOGICAL/ MENTAL	U9	U10	U11	U12
Motivation	1	1	1	1
Self Confidence	1	1	1	1
Competitiveness	2	2	1	1
Concentration	2	2	1	1
Commitment	2	2	2	1
Self-Control	2	2	1	1
Determination	2	2	1	1

PRIORITY KEY	1 = HIGH	2 = MID	3 = LOW	4 = NOT APPLICABLE
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DEVELOPMENT STAGE	LEARN TO TRAIN			
SOCIAL/EMOTIONAL	U9	U10	U11	U12
Listening	2	2	1	1
Cooperation	2	2	1	1
Communication	1	1	1	1
Sharing	2	1	1	1
Problem-solving	2	2	1	1
Decision-making	2	2	1	1
Empathy	3	2	1	1
Patience	3	2	1	1
Respect/Discipline	2	2	1	1
Fair play/Honesty	2	1	1	1

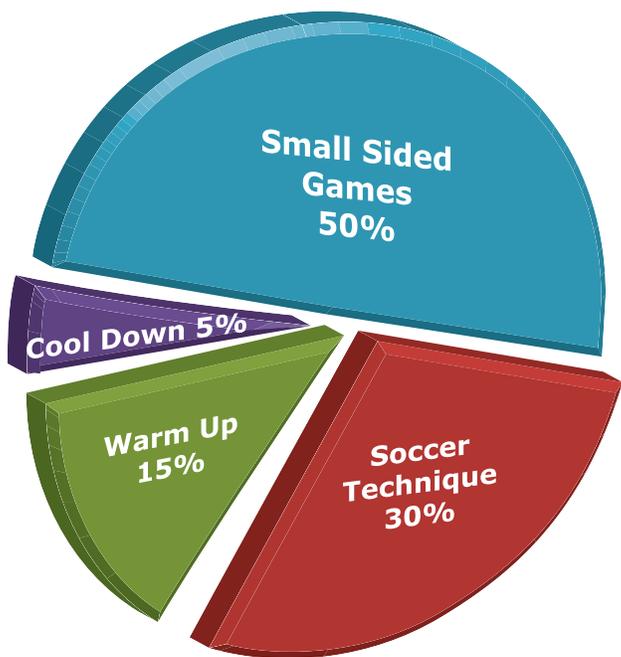
DEVELOPMENT STAGE	LEARN TO TRAIN			
TACTICAL	U9	U10	U11	U12
Possession	2	2	2	2
Transition	2	2	2	2
Combination Play	2	2	2	1
Switching Play	4	4	4	3
Counter Attacking	4	4	4	4
Playing out from the back	2	2	2	1
Attacking Principles	3	3	3	3
Zonal Defending	4	4	4	4
Pressing	3	2	2	2
Retreat	3	3	3	3
Recovery	3	3	3	3
Compactness	3	3	3	2

DEVELOPMENT STAGE	LEARN TO TRAIN			
PHYSICAL	U9	U10	U11	U12
Agility	1	1	1	1
Balance	1	1	1	1
Coordination	1	1	1	1
Stamina	2	2	2	1
Strength	2	2	2	1
Speed	1	1	1	1
Suppleness	2	2	2	2
Acceleration	1	1	1	1
Reaction	1	1	1	1
Basic Motor Skills	1	1	1	1
Perception	1	1	1	1
Awareness	1	1	1	1

PRIORITY KEY	1 = HIGH	2 = MID	3 = LOW	4 = NOT APPLICABLE
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“Unlike other sports, where the coach is responsible for picking the right tactics during the game, soccer truly is a “player’s game” –the coach can try to set the strategy, but the players have to make the decisions on the field. That’s why it’s so important to let them learn by playing.”

*Thorsten Damm
Heidelberg University -Germany*



Learn to Train PRACTICE OBJECTIVES	
TECHNICAL	Improve possession and transition
PHYSICAL	Improve speed, agility, balance, coordination with/without the ball
TACTICAL	Minimal introduction at the older ages of this stage
SOCIAL	Cooperation with teammates in collective tasks during practice
PSYCHOLOGICAL	Create positive, challenging learning environment

Learn to Train PRACTICE CONTENT			
TECHNICAL 70%	PHYSICAL 17%	TACTICAL 3%	SOCIAL 10%

	U9	U10	U11	U12
Game	7v7	7v7	9v9	9v9
Practice	50 min max	50 min max	50 min max	60 min max
Prc x/week	2/3	3	4	4/5

“Our children are as talented as any European nation and we need to believe in our ability and devote our resources that make becoming a Canadian International the ultimate goal. We have certainly begun to identify the necessary steps to improve our training facilities, equipment, and finally implementing LTPD which will ultimately improve the coaching standard. If we are going to develop top quality players on a consistent basis we need to provide them with an outlet to play in and to provide them with highest qualified coaches who have the necessary training, qualifications and experience. We need to provide kids with the proper football environment they will require in order to play at the highest levels. “

*Paul Stalteri
Canada, Tottenham Hotspur FC, Werder Bremen*

Learn To Train Practice

At the Learn to Train age groups the practice methodology is to play as many small-sided games as possible, a minimum of 50% of your practice time should be spent in the small-sided game environment.

The practice would start with a warm-up that would lead into the theme of the session; this warm-up period would incorporate dynamic movement. During the Introduction to small-sided game we must have direction, targets (goals) and opposition. The game can be conditioned, i.e. limited touches, support players, neutral player, more than one goal/target etc.

By playing in more game situations players are forced to deal with and solve realistic game like situations and problems more than ever before. Games are more enjoyable for players and the challenge will be suitable and appropriate to the abilities of the participants.

A sample Learn to Train session is shown below. For more examples, information and practice using this methodology coaches are strongly recommended to attend a **Learn to Train OSA Coaching Course**.

GIVE A PASS, GET A PASS (warm up)

TIME FRAME

5 - 10 minutes

COACHING POINTS

Carry out the exercise at a jogging pace, initially.
Focus on balanced movement on each side of the body
Pass, dribble and receive the ball using both feet.
Vary the direction moved when performing each turn, direction change, etc.

4 CORNER CONTENT

Technical

Passing, receiving

Tactical

Support

Physical

Agility, balance, coordination, change of direction

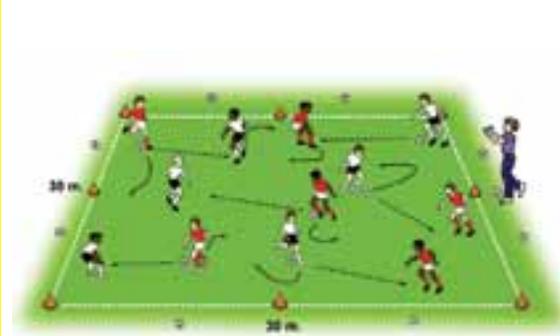
Social

Listening, communication, cooperation

Psychological

Building confidence, cooperation

DIAGRAM



INSTRUCTION

Each player in possession of a ball dribbles the ball looking for a player without a ball to pass to. Players without a ball jog around the area looking to receive a pass and calling for a pass. The ball carrier must use a particular passing technique designated by the coach. The player without the ball must use a particular receiving technique and or turn.

1. Pass with inside of foot 2. Receive with inside of foot & turn inside 3. Front foot pass 4. Receive with inside of foot & turn outside 5. Pass with outside of foot 6. Receive with outside of foot & turn outside 7. Double pass 8. One-touch straight back 9. Wall pass – inside foot 10. Open out, one-touch angled pass with inside foot 11. Wall pass –

DYNAMIC MOVEMENT (warm up)

TIME FRAME

5 minutes

COACHING POINTS

Carry out the exercises at a jogging pace, initially.
Exaggerate the movements to get a full range of motion.
Focus on balanced movement on each side of the body.

4 CORNER CONTENT

Technical

Passing, receiving

Tactical

Support

Physical

Agility, balance, coordination, change of direction

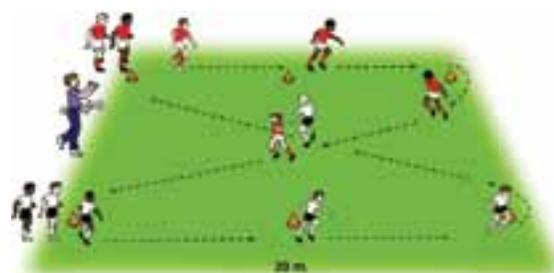
Social

Listening, communication, cooperation

Psychological

Building confidence, cooperation

DIAGRAM



INSTRUCTION

Players carry out dynamic movements as they move diagonally across the square to a new starting position. Each pair carries out the exercises at 5m intervals. Repeat each exercise at least twice before moving on to the next.

Examples of exercises to use:

1. Jog
2. Skip & groin stretch (inside to outside)
3. Jockey backwards (right & left)
4. Skip & groin stretch (outside to inside)
5. Skipping forward
6. Skip & kick (left & right)
7. Skipping sideways
8. Skip & upper body twist (right & left)
9. Heel flicks
10. Cross steps
11. High knee raises
12. Wide steps

DRIBBLING & CROSSING - WING PLAY

TIME FRAME

20 minutes

COACHING POINTS

Take a long first touch to take space quickly. Touch the ball inside slightly to prepare to cross.

Take a big last step & watch ball as you strike it. Strike through the middle of the ball using the instep. Aim for the back half of the box.

4 CORNER CONTENT

Technical

Passing, dribbling, crossing, finishing

Tactical

Support

Physical

Agility, balance, coordination, change of direction

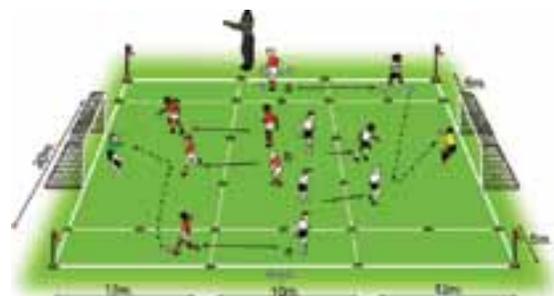
Social

Listening, communication, cooperation

Psychological

Building confidence, cooperation

DIAGRAM



INSTRUCTION

Groups of six, plus two GKs working in a playing area of 34x30m.

A 5m wing channel on each side of the playing area.

Each group attacks a goal at opposite ends.

Markers to indicate the playing area as shown

7v7 DRIBBLING GAME

TIME FRAME

15 minutes

COACHING POINTS

Try to cross early to avoid the block. If blocked, create ½ metre of space for the cross by using various dribbling techniques. Fake to pass go for cross.

Fake to cross and pass. Be composed and protect the ball

4 CORNER CONTENT

Technical

Passing, dribbling, crossing, finishing

Tactical

Support

Physical

Agility, balance, coordination, change of direction

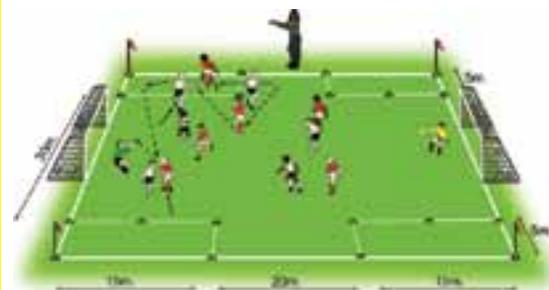
Social

Listening, communication, cooperation

Psychological

Building confidence, cooperation

DIAGRAM



INSTRUCTION

Two teams of 7 including the GKs. Playing field of 50x40m. to encourage dribbling. Markers to indicate crossing zones where only one player at a time can enter and be unchallenged. One goal at each end.

SMALL SIDED GAME • 6V6 PLUS 2 NEUTRAL PLAYERS • PASSING & RECEIVING

TIME FRAME

15 minutes

COACHING POINTS

Get behind the ball to receive it. Receive the ball facing forward if possible

Relax your controlling surface on contact.

Keep the ball rolling & out of your feet.

Watch the ball.

Passing: Part of foot; part of ball

4 CORNER CONTENT

Technical

Passing, dribbling, crossing, finishing

Tactical

Support

Physical

Agility, balance, coordination, change of direction

Social

Listening, communication, cooperation

Psychological

Building confidence, cooperation

DIAGRAM



INSTRUCTION

This game is designed to allow players in possession of the ball with space and increased passing options in a competitive situation. This is accomplished by establishing an environment where there are always extra players to which the player on the ball can pass. Normal rules of soccer apply with the exception that the game must be restarted with a “kick-in” when the ball goes out over the touch line. Switch the neutral players every 5 minutes.

Progression: For the last 5-10 minutes, in the defending half of the field players are free to take as many touches as they wish.

SOCCKER TENNIS 2V2 • PASSING & RECEIVING

TIME FRAME

15 minutes

COACHING POINTS

Get behind the ball to receive it.

- Relax your foot as you make contact with it
- Keep the ball rolling.
- Watch the ball.
- Strike through the middle of the ball.
- Make you ankle stiff as you strike the ball.
- Keep the ball low.

4 CORNER CONTENT

Technical

Passing, dribbling, crossing, finishing

Tactical

Support

Physical

Agility, balance, coordination, change of direction

Social

Listening, communication, cooperation

Psychological

Building confidence, cooperation

DIAGRAM



INSTRUCTION

2 players vs 2 players. **To score** the ball must be played through the gate, beyond the “no go zone” (shaded area) and through the opponents court and out of play, either directly or off an opponent. The ball must pass through the gate **along the ground** or the point/serve is lost. A team can only **score off their own serve** but a team that is not serving can win the right to serve and then begin to pick up points. **Winner is the first team to 15 points** and ahead by 2 points. Each player is **allowed 3 touches** to control the ball and pass or attempt to score a point. **The ball cannot be kicked back through the goal first time** – it must be controlled first. Each team may **only pass the ball twice on their side** of the gate before they must try and score. Failure to get the ball through the gate after the 2nd pass results in a loss of the point/serve.

PASS & RECEIVE • FINAL GAME 4V4

TIME FRAME

15 minutes

COACHING POINTS

Draw the defender by running at them with the ball.

- Pass the ball and look to get it back behind the defender.
- Disguise the pass (use outside of foot, open out and play back inside, etc)
- Work in triangles with support players.

4 CORNER CONTENT

Technical

Passing, dribbling, crossing, finishing

Tactical

Support

Physical

Agility, balance, coordination, change of direction

Social

Listening, communication, cooperation

Psychological

Building confidence, cooperation

DIAGRAM



INSTRUCTION

Goals are scored in the normal way. When the ball crosses the goal line the play is always restarted with a GK's throw (no corner kicks or goal kicks). If the ball crosses the touch line the game is restarted with a “kick-in”. Initially, the game is conditioned whereby players are limited to three touches only in their own half of the field but they have unlimited touches in the opponents half. Too many touches in your own half results in a free kick to the opposing team.

2. Goals scored following a combined play doubled

COOL DOWN

5 minutes

Players lower heat rate by slow jogging, skips, hops. Static Stretching.

Injury Review - Hydration

Review - Session Passing & Receiving

LEARN TO TRAIN PLAYER CHARACTERISTICS

UNDER 9 – UNDER 10 PLAYERS

As we move up the age ladder to the U9-10 level there are many differences we must attend to in order to provide an optimal experience for young players of this age. However, there are also many similarities. Just as in parenting, it is important to be consistent in coaching and we must make sure that we follow a progressive trend of development for young players. To this end, we need to continue to focus on technique during our practices, as we did at the younger ages. Creating environments in which players get maximum repetitions of technical skills is key. Players at this age should still work on ball mastery and demonstrate growing familiarity and comfort ability with a ball at their feet.

TYPICAL CHARACTERISTICS OF LEARN TO TRAIN U9- U10 PLAYERS

- Attention span lengthens from U8—they start to show the ability to sequence thought and actions
- They start to think ahead and think “If this, then that”
- They are more inclined towards wanting to play soccer rather than being told to play
- Demonstrate increased self-responsibility – bringing a ball, water and all gear should now be their complete responsibility
- Children at this age begin to become aware of peer pressure
- Players greatly affiliate with their team or their coach—“I play for United” or “I play for Coach Frank’s team”
- There is a wide continuum of maturity evident on most teams. This is still a crucial age for technical skill development

UNDER 11 -UNDER 12 PLAYERS

Typically players of this age start to begin to understand the basic simple tactical situations of the game and are more aware of movement off the ball and the reasons for tactical choices. Problem-solving becomes systematic and these players tend to learn quickly. Children of this age typically are beginning to develop abstract awareness, so they can understand coaches when we talk about space and runs off of the ball. However, just because they understand these basic tactical concepts does not mean we should focus on these concepts entirely. Players are still developing technically at this age, especially as they go through growth spurts and awkward phases. It is quite common to look out at a U12 field and see players that are physically the size of adults. Yet, other U12 players appear as if they could still be in the 3rd grade. These children are all growing at different rates and undergoing physical, mental, emotional, and social changes. As coaches, we need to be sensitive to these changes and their social implications when coaching this age group. Some players may pick up skills quickly, whereas others may struggle. However, it may be the case that this is simply the result of differences in maturation. In a year, the slower developer may surpass the player who developed earlier. For this reason we need to be patient and keep open minds about all players through these years. They are aware of their struggles more than anyone else as peer evaluation is omnipresent at these ages. When we see them struggling, it is important for us to help them and to keep the game fun.

TYPICAL CHARACTERISTICS OF LEARN TO TRAIN U11- U12 PLAYERS

- All children are maturing at different rates
- Players need to warm-up and perform dynamic movement---muscle pulls and other nagging injuries are common otherwise
- Players will typically understand elemental abstract concepts and hypothetical situations (basic tactics and strategy)
- They like to solve problems
- Peer evaluation is a constant
- Egos are sensitive
- Coordination may depend on whether or not they are in a growth spurt
- Technique still needs to be reinforced constantly
- Playing too much can lead to overuse injuries
- Playing too much and not feeling like they have a choice in the matter can lead to burnout and drop-out
- This is the dawn of tactics!
- Keep asking the players to be creative and to take risks---we never want them to stop doing these things
- Ask for feedback from them---they will tell you how things are going
- Try to hand over leadership and ownership of the team to them; give them soccer homework and challenges
- Keep it fun!!!

I use a global method. Yes, I use direct methods when preparing our organization, but I also use guided discovery where I create the practice, dictate the aim, and the players come up with different solutions

*Jose Mourinho
Real Madrid Head Coach*

LEARN TO TRAIN - PRACTICE RECOMMENDATIONS

- Continue to develop ball mastery in a larger environment with more teammates and opponents
- Start to develop other surfaces to control the ball
- Develop the ability to control the ball and look, Introduce decision-making for the next play and apply the proper technique
- Develop the ability to run with the ball towards goal and away from goal to gain space and use width
- Develop dribbling 1v1 using different fakes and changes of direction, shielding at the older ages of the stage
- Develop passing the ball using different surfaces of both feet
- Introduce combination plays with 2 or 3 players
- Develop shooting skills, at longer distances. Introduce, volleys, bent shots and chips using different surfaces
- Introduce the use of width at u9 and u10 and depth at u11 and u12
- Develop the ability to look up and read GK position to make a good decision and apply proper technique.

LEARN TO TRAIN - COACHING METHODOLOGY

- Small-sided games, allow the game to be the teacher
- Player centred- allow the players to make decisions
- Use Coaching Key Factors to teach the players
- Demonstrate what you would like the players to do
- Keep information positive, brief and concise
- Create a positive learning environment
- Set appropriate challenges
- Practices should have a theme e.g. passing or shooting
- Use a variety of interventions e.g. question and answer, guided discovery, command
- Consider a young player's self esteem
- Avoid children standing in lines

Learn To Train - Coaching Measures

The players have now progressed into the Learn to Train phase of their development. At the later stages of the Learn to Train phase the concept of tactics are slowly introduced. The focus is still on the technical skills required in the game, with small-sided games being the main teaching tool used.

TECHNICAL		
Dribbling	Right and left, various surfaces	Maintain close control at pace in tight situations
Shooting	Right and left, various surfaces	Accurate, more powerful shots from longer distance, bent, chip and volley
Running with the ball	Right and left feet	Running at various speeds with the ball under control with head up/eyes up
Ball Control	Ball mastery	Continue improvement of ball mastery in reduced spaces; more teammates and opponents
Passing	Right and left, various surfaces	Player should be passing the ball accurately over distances 10m – 25m. Intro passing with the chest
Receiving	Right, left, chest, thighs	Receiving the ball from ground and air whilst under some pressure
Heading	Using forehead, eyes on ball	No heading a fully inflated ball until 12 years old. Deflated softer ball can be used to get technique
Shielding the ball	Using body to protect the ball	Introduction to shielding, understanding how to use the body to protect the ball with head up/eyes up
Crossing	Right and left foot, various surfaces	Crossing the ball into the penalty area, using various surfaces. Introduction of various types of crosses.
Finishing	Scoring from close range	First touch finishing, volleys, passes, shots from close distances.
1v1 Defending	Defending as an individual	Pressing, preventing forward play, preventing crosses

TACTICAL		
Possession	Individual and team's ability to retain the ball	Introduce later in the stage. Understand angles and distances of support and that player mobility will allow team possession to take place.
Transition	Recognizing when the ball is lost or retained	Introduce later in the stage. Changing from attacking to defending and vice versa.
Combination Play	Player awareness to combination opportunities	Introduce later in the stage. Recognizing when wall pass, take over, set up etc. are available to play.
Switching play	Taking up correct positions to allow the switch to take place	Introduce later in the stage. The ability to pass the ball from one side of the field to the other, quickly
Playing out from the back	Confident & comfortable playing close to their own goal	Introduce later in the stage. The ability to be confident with the ball and to build the attack from close to their own goal
Attacking Principles	Players understanding	Introduce later in the stage. Introduce players to the 5 attacking principles of play
Pressing	Understanding when to press	Introduce later in the stage. Individual pressing, closing down the ball carrier
Retreat	Understanding when to retreat and to where	Introduce later in the stage. Individually and as a group to get between the ball and the goal.
Recovery	Understanding when and where to recover too	Introduce later in the stage. After getting beat, making correct recovery runs to get in a good defensive position.

SOCIAL/EMOTIONAL		
Listening	Listen Quietly	Players will now have an improved ability to listen to details from the coach and others. Continue to be brief with information.
Cooperation	With Coach and teammates	Players now start to cooperate with each other more, on and off the field
Communication	Verbal communication	Communication with teammates is improving, giving helpful performance information and encouragement. Communication with coach is developing
Sharing	Sharing the ball and ideas	More advanced knowledge of understanding that passing can help them be successful as an individual and as a team. Sharing of basic knowledge is now introduced by players
Problem-solving	Working out mistakes	Players will display a basic understanding of working through their mistakes to correct them. Players are understanding that mistakes are allowed and part of learning
Decision making	Game decisions	Players are now working out simple game-related decisions. Some may still need assistance
Empathy	Assisting others in games	Starting to assist others with their problems in games and activities
Patience	Patience with themselves and others	Displaying an increased ability to demonstrate patience with themselves and teammates as they work through mastering techniques and skills
Respect/Discipline	Respecting others and displaying good behaviour	Players are able to respect other players' equipment and space. Behaviour is more social. Now starting to respect officials, opponents etc.
Fair Play/Honesty	Playing within the LOTG	Better understanding of the basic laws of the game

PSYCHOLOGICAL/MENTAL		
Motivation	Fun, rewarding, successful activities	Improved player's motivation, through involvement in fun, exciting, challenging and successful activities. Player's success is now encouraging them to attempt more difficult tasks
Self Confidence	Safe, positive nurturing environment	Players are now willing to express themselves more. Not afraid to make mistakes. Creativity and expression is now starting to show itself more. Involve players in officiating or leading activities at practice. Continue to use positive reinforcement with players.
Competitiveness	Displaying desire to be successful	Players are displaying the desire to be successful in practice activities and small-sided games. This competitiveness may have to be managed to keep it in line.
Concentration	An ability to stay on task	Improved attention span, improved ability to stay on task for slightly longer periods. Involve players in leading tasks and making decisions at practice
Commitment	Apply themselves at practice and completing activities	Players are happily attending the majority of practices and games. Will complete activities and exercises during practice. Be patient but demand fairly of players
Self-Control	In control of emotions	While in stressful situations, players are starting to show an improvement in controlling their emotions
Determination	Displays a determination to complete tasks	Starting to not give up easily. Starting to display a determination to complete tasks and to be their best

PHYSICAL		
Agility	Moving in quick controlled, movements	Continued Improvement in twisting, turning etc. Can be developed during warm-ups, cool downs and small-sided games
Balance	Right and left foot	Continued Improvement, can now balance in more control, in a variety of positions. Can be further developed during warm-ups, cool downs and games
Coordination	Using small-sided games	Multiple movements are smoother and more controlled. Can be further developed during warm-ups, cool downs and small-sided games
Stamina	Using small-sided games	Low priority. Developed through activities and small-sided games.
Strength	No weights to be used	Low priority but can be developed through activities and games that work with the child's body weight (as opposed to weights and formal exercises)
Speed	Multi Directional	Improvements in fast cadence of movement, developing linear, lateral and multi directional speed using exciting games and exercises.
Suppleness	Dynamic Stretching	Continue with exercises that mimic movements that are required in sport e.g. dynamic stretching. Should include whole body movements, shoulders, trunk, hips, knees
Acceleration	Activities and Exercises	Should be developed using challenging, fun games that use acceleration as a part of the activity
Reaction	For a variety of starting positions	Continue to work on reaction speeds from laying, sitting, crouching, standing, jogging positions. Can be developed during warm-ups, cool downs and games
Basic Motor Skills	Moving in quick, controlled, smooth movements	Develop in fun games and activities.
Perception	Right and left foot	Introduce and develop playing small-sided games
Awareness	Using small-sided games	Introduce and develop playing small-sided games

Goalkeeping represents a specialized array of skill sets that include abilities in ball handling (i.e. using the hands to catch, punch or deflect the ball), diving, throwing receiving, kicking, passing, foot movement and agility.

At the younger ages introduce goalkeeping to all your players. Don't be in a rush to select a GK, there is lots of time for all players to play all over the field including in goal. To improve foot skills goalkeepers should join in with all players during practice.

GOALKEEPING - TECHNICAL/TACTICAL				
TECHNIQUE	ACTIVE START	FUNDAMENTALS	LEARN TO TRAIN	NOTES
	All players participate in the activities below.	All players should take a turn in goal using small-sided games with correct sized goals.	All players still take turns in goal. Some will show a preference for the position. Resist the temptation to limit GK to only a few players.	Be patient. All players take turns in goal.
Footwork	All players are Introduced to moving side to side to get in line with the ball.	Moving in different directions using different types of runs to get in line with the ball.	Footwork is developing. Agility and coordination are ways to improve GK ability. Introduce SAQ program.	Footwork is to be focus at all sessions.
Ball handling	All players are introduced to catching a ball at various heights (no high balls)	From ground, waist, chest and head high and above. With simple serves only.	Intro balls from different angles and trajectories while standing and diving. Intro deflecting, not punching. 2 fist punching is intro later in the stage, thrown serves only.	Be careful, balls can be served with hands in place of shooting towards GK's, be safe!
Throwing	All players are introduced to throwing a smaller ball with 2 hands, then 1 hand.	Introduce over arm and underarm throws. Short distances only.	Further develop the throws and introduce the javelin and side arm throw. Distances increase.	
Shot stopping	Introduction of "diving" from a kneeling position.	Intro correct basic diving technique. Intro diving at feet with no opposition.	Develop jump, roll and fall. Intro side dives and later forward, aerial, power and high.	Safety is paramount
Positioning		Introduction of correct body shape, stance, ready position.	Intro reading the space behind defenders and sweeper/keeper role is developed later in this stage.	
Distribution		Kicking/passing from the ground and from the air.	Increase distance with kicks/passes/throws, from short to mid to long.	
Observation		Encourage GK to push out when ball is at other end of the end of the field.	GK is now able to see the ball and the opponent who is in a dangerous position.	
Communication		Intro basic communication- "keeper", "away".	Start adding words based on situations around the penalty area, picked up during the run of play.	
Set pieces		Basic technique for goal kicks	Develop goal kicks. Introduce different tactical options.	
Decision-making			Intro based build up and counter attack and selection of technique.	

The Goalkeepers' Psychological/Mental/Social/Emotional and Physical development will follow alongside the other players in their stage of development. This information is shown in previous tables in this document.

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Canadian Soccer Association	Wellness to World Cup Volume 2
Canadian Sport For Life	CS4L Documents
Belgian Football Association	Developing Grassroots Football
The FA	Child Friendly Football Program and the Future Game
Australia Football Federation	Optus Small Sided Football
Scottish Football Association	Emerging Talent Program
United States Soccer Association	US Soccer Curriculum
US Youth Soccer	Youth Development Document
German Football Federation	Youth Development Program
Bryst Football Academy	Curriculum
European Club Association	Report on Youth Academies
New Zealand Football	Whole of Football Plan

OSA LTPD Resources

Recreation and Development matrices
A Guide to Festivals in Ontario
Game Organization Guide
Field Organization Guide
League Management Guide: Learning to Train
How Soccer in Ontario is Changing

These resources along with others
are available on the OSA website
www.soccer.on.ca

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