



Coaching Info Pack

This pack is designed to give the coaches a starting point for many challenges you may be faced within the season. I am committed to helping your club grow and develop quality players and above all quality people.

I hope this pack will help you through this season and offer some helpful advice from planning sessions to information on diet & nutrition.

A saying is that 'I coach people; I just use soccer to do it'. Less than 1% of the population will make it into professional soccer so what should the focus be on? If the focus is coaching around a positive environment and encourage children to be creative, not only will it produce healthy creative soccer players, but also happy, motivated people. Negative feedback will only harvest children that are afraid to make mistakes and could seriously effect their development for example:

'When a child is 1 year old and trying to walk but failing to make a step, we never say well maybe walking just isn't for you? We know walking is something every human can do so the feedback to the young person is always positive and encouraging'. Why can't the same be for soccer? If we constantly encourage our young players with positive feedback and constantly ask them questions to help their learning then this could have a huge effect on the level of play throughout the kids we work with.

I hope you enjoy some of the literature included and I wish you all the best for the season. Please feel free to contact me with any questions you may have.

Best Regards,

Pure Soccer Academy

PSA@PURESOCCKER.COM

1 - Positions & Positioning

Below you will find some information regarding positions within the game and a little history on the position and what is expected of each position:

#3. Sweeper / Libero

The "libero" position was popularized by German legend Franz Beckenbauer in the 1970's. At the 1990 World Cup, in Italy, even Brazil played with a sweeper for the very first time. The outraged Pelé severely criticized national head coach Lazaroni and Brazil was eliminated early in the tournament. Conversely, Germany finished first in the same tournament while playing with a libero. Since Italy 1990, many teams have abandoned the use of a sweeper, yet some (especially German) clubs still employ it today.

The sweeper must always be "the last player" in defense (after the goalkeeper, of course). His job is to close down gaps left by other defenders. The libero roams laterally, a few meters behind the last line of fullbacks. He must try not to sway too far towards the flanks.

The sweeper analyzes the development of plays, anticipates where open angles and passing lanes are forming and make quick decisions about dealing with them. Because they never mark enemy attackers, sweepers can move a great deal forward when their team is in possession of the ball. This frequently finds the enemy defense unprepared as an unmarked player is unexpectedly introduced to the play. Overall, the sweeper should be very perceptive (usually experienced) with good ball handling skills and confidence.



#3 or #5. Stopper / Center fullback

The stopper is the center player in a defensive line. Some teams may use two stoppers in conjunction. Their main task is to mark the most advanced enemy forwards and fight with them in 50/50 encounters. This is the most defensively-oriented field position in soccer. Stoppers have to remain in the backline, almost at all times and usually cover the shortest distance in a match (second only to goalkeepers). Stoppers rarely get involved in offense, except in set pieces like corners and during initial buildup. Playing in the middle of a defensive line means having the ball served in your area from various directions and at variable heights. Dealing with such situations requires aggressiveness, strength, speed, good heading ability and courageousness in one-on-one battles.



#2 or #4. Fullback

Fullbacks are the defenders positioned on each side of the stopper. They cover the space along the entire flank and therefore must be fairly quick. In defense, the fullback usually marks an enemy forward or covers his flank, awaiting incoming enemy wingers. Fullbacks get actively involved in their team's offense by staying wide, making overlapping runs and pushing up the flank. In modern football, it is not uncommon for a free (not marking) fullback to move up the wing and take the position of a winger thus spreading the enemy defense apart. To do this job, fullbacks need to have good speed and stamina.



#6 or #11. Outside midfielder

The outside midfielder must be very fit and is supposed to be active in both defense and offense. In defense, the he must mark the widest opponent on his flank. When he finds himself free, the outside midfielder may pinch in towards the middle while remaining on the same level with the ball. This way, he is preserving the defensive compactness of his team. In attack, the outside midfielder must stay wide, especially in the early stages of buildup. By providing width, he will stretch out the enemy defense. The outside midfielder should make supporting runs up the sideline and should be able to carry the ball. Besides good stamina the winger must also possess good one-versus-one skills.



#6 or #11. Winger

Even although the classical winger (like Garrincha) who dribbles up the sideline is nowadays being replaced by an all-purpose outside midfielder, the "old" winger position is still present in many teams today. Wingers are commonly found in teams who play with three attackers.

The definition of a winger is not quite universal and it is not uncommon to refer to an outside midfielder as a winger. Traditionally, wingers are strictly attacking players who stay wide, dribble the ball forward and serve in crosses.



#5. Defensive midfielder

The defensive midfielder is the backbone of the team. His job is similar to that of the sweeper with the exception that he operates in front of the defense, between the offensive midfielders and the stopper. He roams laterally from sideline to sideline, usually pressuring the ball. If any of his teammates gets beaten in the middle of the field, the defensive midfielder is expected to be first in providing backup.

In offense, the defensive midfielder must stay behind the attacking line, collecting rebounds and miss-kicks. He is also expected to make supporting runs and give back pass options, especially when the ball is out, near the sideline. Brazil's former captain Dungha is a good example of a defensive midfielder. He led his team to the World Cup final in both '94 and '98. Claude Makelele of Chelsea is another more recent example. Both of him and Dungha are aggressive tacklers and are always well positioned.



#8 or #7. Center / Attacking / Offensive midfielder

Offensive midfielders are usually the fittest players in a team, considering that they have to be involved in almost every attacking play. Apart from their top form, midfielders need to have good technical ability. When a skillful midfielder is dribbling, he is not supposed to look at his feet, but should be scanning the field for open space and moving teammates. In a practical sense, the midfielder needs to possess enough skill so that he can concentrate on his primary job of distributing the ball without worrying about the mechanics involved.

Overall, the job requires skill, stamina as well as vision and tactical understanding.

When his team does not have possession, the center midfielder is expected to drop back and pressure the ball. In offense the attacking midfielder should be involved in the action by making runs towards the ball. Even before he gets it, he should already know where and how he wants to distribute it.

Offensive midfielders who are very active in directing their team's attacks are often given the title "playmakers". Playmakers need to be fed a lot of passes in order to coordinate the offensive movement of their team. Zinedine Zidane of France, Carlos Valderrama of Columbia and Krasimir Balakov of Bulgaria are great examples.



#10. Striker

The main ability of this player must be his strength and heading. His job is simple: to stay in front of the enemy goal, attract enemy defenders and score. Unlike the typical forward, the striker doesn't shift to the sides as much. He stays in the middle as a target man and will typically be marked by at least one player. On attacks, he may try checking to the ball and shielding or laying it off, but he'll usually stay with the last enemy defender. The striker's defensive duties are to pressure the opposing defenders while they are initiating an attack. Some of the more popular strikers in the game include Jan Koller, Carsten Jancker, Christian Vieri and Andriy Shevchenko. All of them are powerful, good in the air and it's almost impossible to knock them off the ball.



#9 or #10. Forward

The job of the forward is not merely to head for goal every time he receives the ball. He must also make runs towards his own goal and support the midfield rather than simply rush forward. This can best be observed by watching top level games, where forwards are often playing with their back turned to the enemy goal.



“Leading by example”



Whenever a team is playing with two forwards, they must both move in conjunction. If the ball is on the left flank for example, they must shift towards it so that one of them is in the center and the other near the sideline. By keeping the distance between each other constant, forwards can work the ball effectively while pulling apart the enemy defense. Since forwards usually work under a lot of enemy pressure, they need pace and quick ball handling skills.



Basic Defensive Positioning

The 3 basic positions of players on defense are best described by the acronym "PCB" (Pressure-Cover-Balance).

The person closest to the ball is called the First Defender, and his job is to provide PRESSURE on the ball.

The second-closest person who is goal-side of the ball (meaning closer to his team's goal than the opponent) is called the Second Defender. His job is to provide COVER. That is, to be in a position to immediately become the pressure person if the attacker gets by the First Defender. In addition, the Second Defender will frequently have the additional job of guarding (called "marking") another off-ball attacker to whom the ball might be passed for a shot. The Second Defender will normally chose to take up a position ball-side of his mark if possible, but will mark goal-side if the ball-side position makes it impossible for him to provide support for the First Defender. Goal-side marking is also used if a defender knows that his mark is much faster than he is, as it gives him the lead that he needs to keep from being beaten.

The defender who is in the deepest position (closest to goal) if a line were to be drawn directly from the attacker to the goal is called the Third Defender. His job is to provide BALANCE to the defense. In essence, he is providing additional cover for the two primary defenders, and also watching out for additional incoming attackers making runs towards the center or far post areas of the goal.

All players should be taught these basic principles, and how to apply them in a game setting. It's also very important that players understand their supporting duties to those players who are immediately around them. For example, someone who is a midfielder must know that they must automatically and immediately assume the role of the "pressuring defender" if they're the closest player to the ball. Additionally, they must understand that they need to loop around to provide cover for the defender behind them and pick up his mark if they're initially beaten by the attacker. Sometimes, young players mistakenly believe that, unless they have been given the job title of "defender", they do not have defensive duties. Indeed, some coaches refuse to even use the label of "defender" in order to avoid this confusion, and just refer to the players at the back of the group as "backs", in order to reinforce the idea that everyone is a "defender" when their team does not have the ball.

It is normally easier for players to learn this basic positioning in terms of "Pressure-Cover-Balance", rather than using terms like First Defender. Thus, all that a young player needs to know is that the closest player to the ball is the Pressure player and to know what the job of the Pressure player is. Ditto for the Cover player and the balance player.



Basic Offensive Positioning

There are also 3 basic positions in the attack. The person with the ball is called the First Attacker. His job is to retain possession while getting the ball as close to goal as possible by dribbling, passing or shooting.

The player(s) within an easy ground pass of the First Attacker are called Second Attackers. Up until the time when the ball is advanced to within scoring range of the goal, the primary role of the Second Attacker(s) is to prevent loss of possession, while still allowing the ball to be advanced forward if at all possible. Prior to getting into scoring range, a single Second Attacker typically will position himself so as to allow short relay passes between himself and the First Attacker in order to move the ball around the defenders). Of course, the goal of the attackers is to get the ball past all of the defenders into unobstructed space within scoring range of the goal and then, ultimately, into the goal itself.

Therefore, as the ball moves into scoring range, the role of the single Second Attacker switches from a "safety-first" orientation of keeping possession, which may even involve moving the ball away from the goal in order to keep it. Instead of "safety", the Second Attacker's role is to set up a shot on goal for himself or the First Attacker.

At this point, the Second Attacker's needs to move into a position that will allow the First Attacker to pass the ball into "scoring space" behind or to the side of the defenders, i.e., space from which an immediate shot can be taken. The positioning of the single Second Attacker will depend on the number of defenders to be beaten. Normally, however, a single Second Attacker will position himself on the far side of the defenders and set up within scoring range of the far post area. This allows him to distract and/or pull one defender away from the central goal area or, if unobserved, to sneak in the "back door" while everyone is watching the attacker with the ball.

Where there are two Second Attackers (i.e. close supporters) available, they will position themselves to form a moving triangle with their on-ball teammate, by moving into space between or to the side of the defenders so that the ball always has a clear path to their feet. As the ball is moved into scoring range, one of these players will often abandon his close support role and will become a Third Attacker although this job also may be taken up by any other off-ball teammate who can fulfill the duties.

The Third Attacker's job is to unbalance the defense by making deep runs, usually to the far side of the goal. By doing this, the Third Attacker pulls defenders away from the goal mouth; distracts the keeper and defenders in front of the goal; and opens up space in front of the goal which can be exploited by incoming teammates.



2 - Effective Session Planning

We design a coaching session in an effort to improve the way our team and the individuals within it perform. This is the nature of our job. The way we measure the improvement and the relative success of our session is through the scrimmage at the end. If there is no improvement in the way the players scrimmage then we have not been immediately successful in achieving our aims and objectives.

The following guidelines propose a method of session planning where the coach works backwards from the scrimmage to the warm up. The idea is that we are always working towards a clearly defined goal.

Before planning a session the coach should have a very clear idea of what aspect of the team's play he or she wishes to improve and should then visualize them successfully performing that skill in the scrimmage at the end of the next session. The coach can literally play a perfect videotape in their 'mind's eye'! Improved performance in the scrimmage / game is the main goal and should be the measuring tool for successful coaching. This goal should be shared with the players at the beginning of the next session thus involving them more actively in their own learning.

The penultimate activity will normally take the form of a conditioned (restricted) game or functional activity which will maximize the opportunity to reinforce the theme of the day in a game like setting e.g. movement of the front two attackers. The nature of this activity will depend on the age and ability level of the players but should lead smoothly into the scrimmage as a bridging activity. Its relevance to the game must be apparent to the players. It may involve organizing the field area (in terms of size, placement of goals, number of goals, channels etc.) to facilitate the repetition of a particular theme, or it may involve placing the players in specific roles relating to team formation. This is an important part of the session which is often overlooked because other activities have over-run. It should be remembered that 'everything goes back to the game'.

The preceding technical/tactical activities should ensure maximum activity and quality feedback from the coach. This feedback should be specific to individuals whenever possible but to the whole group if relevant. As educators we must decide in each unique situation which method we should use. As with the later stages of the session the players need to be exposed to quality demonstrations so that they take away a very clear, visual imprint of the correct techniques. This is far more important than what you say to them! Remember, 'a picture paints a thousand words'.

In this model the final aspect of planning will be the warm up and this should be designed to lead into the technical/tactical practice and should introduce the first couple of coaching points. If a coach specifically wants to conduct a ball- each warm-up then the first activity after the warm-up needs to be very sharply focused on the theme of the day, otherwise the players are going to be confused about the objectives.

By planning the session with a clear end in mind, (defined by performance in the game situation) there will be pace and a clear purpose to each activity. It will also be easier to evaluate the success of a session clinically. Simply put, if there is no improvement in the scrimmage then we have not been immediately effective in realizing our objectives and our planning for the next session will need to reflect this.



3 - Small Sided Games – Why & At What Age?

“We could drastically improve the standards of English football immediately if we made small children play on small pitches with small goals, so that they can be in the vicinity of each other and learn to pass the ball to each other instead of having to hoof it. They should ban playing on big pitches until children get to 13 or 14”

Gary Lineker (2nd in the all time English National Team Scoring Charts and former Leicester City player)

United States Youth Soccer Association (USYSA at www.usyouthsoccer.org) recommend that U6's play 3v3 without a goalkeeper on a field that is no bigger than 30 yards long and 25 yards wide with no referee; U8's play 4v4, without a goalkeeper, on a field that is no bigger than 35 yards long and 30 yards wide with a referee but no offsides. High Point Soccer currently employs the following:

U5 – 4v4 with no goalkeepers on a 20 x 30 yard field

U7 – 5v5 with goalkeepers on a 20 x 30 yard field

In brief the children's psychomotor, cognitive and psychosocial characteristics are not ready for a more complex environment than outlined above based upon their chronological age;

- ✓ They will touch the ball more with smaller numbers
- ✓ They need to be able to better control the ball in a smaller space (less space means less time which requires greater efficiency with the ball).
- ✓ The children will be more involved with all three aspects of “soccer”: attacking, defending and transition.
- ✓ In a larger game the players can often separate from each other and only play one part of game (“I'm a forward so I don't have to defend”) rather than transition to defense once their team loses the ball (or vice versa if they win the ball).
- ✓ Essentially there is no place to hide in a smaller sided game and thus each player is more involved because in order to be successful everyone must attack and defend and transition between the two.

The size of the field does not restrict the players' ability to run; in fact, I would bet that if the player were involved in all three aspects of the game they would now be running more. The smaller sided games on smaller fields encourage more skill development with the ball and do not encourage the children to just kick the ball and run after it which may be effective at a younger age due to athleticism but becomes counterproductive at older ages when team defending generally negates such tactics. In fact at the older age groups, even at the professional level, most of the players training sessions consist of smaller sided games with no goalkeeper's. Perhaps the biggest reason for small sided games is because they are very economical; in other words they address all four pillars of the game: the technical (skill development), the tactical (decision making), the physical and the psychological. Taken from www.hudsonsoccer.com

Here are some of the reasons why we believe, as soccer coaches, administrators and parents must guarantee that our young soccer players play small-sided games:

1. Because we want our young soccer players to touch the soccer ball more often and become more skillful with it! (Individual technical development)
2. Because we want our young soccer players to make more, less-complicated decisions during the game! (Tactical development)
3. Because we want our young soccer players to be more physically efficient in the field space they are playing in! (Reduced field size)

"Leading by example"



4. Because we want our young soccer players to have more individual teaching time with the coach! Fewer players on the field and less players on the team will guarantee this! (Need to feel worthy and need to feel important)

5. Because we want our young soccer players to have more, involved playing time in the game! (More opportunity to solve problems that only the game presents)

6. Because we want our young soccer players to have more opportunity to play on both sides of the ball! (More exposure to attacking and defending situations)

7. Because we want our young soccer players to have more opportunities to score goals! (Pure excitement)

These are the reasons why we adults must foster "Small-Sided Games" in our youth soccer programs. The "Small-Sided" environment is a developmentally appropriate environment for our young soccer players. It's a FUN environment that focuses on the young soccer player. ***It just makes sense doesn't it?***

Source: www.usyouthsoccer.org



4 - RECOMMENDED TRAINING SESSION TO MATCH RATIO **TRAINING:**

- Frequency
- Duration
- Training Sessions-to-Match Ratio

U6: 1 day per week

45-60 minutes

1:1

Or 0:1 – the idea here is for the U6 players to show up on Saturday or Sunday for their hour which includes 20 to 30 minutes of appropriate activities and then a 3 v 3 match.

This is the academy approach in which the players are not assigned to teams, but all children in the age group meet at the same time and place to be trained and have a game.

U8: 1-2 day per week

45 to 75 minutes

1 or 2:1

U10: 2 days per week

60 to 75 minutes

2:1

U12: 2 to 3 days per week

60 to 75 minutes

2 or 3:1

U14: 3 days per week

75 minutes

3:1

U16: 3 days per week

75 to 90 minutes

3 or 4:1

U19: 4 to 5 days per week

90 minutes

4 or 5:1



5 - Nutrition & Fluids

Water for Maximum Performance

A loss of water that exceeds 2 percent of one's body weight significantly impairs endurance performance. Therefore, it is recommended that athletes drink lots of water, before, during, and after working out. After exercising in hot and humid environments for one hour a water loss of up to 0.5 lbs per mile may occur. To replace fluid loss under these conditions, an exerciser would have to drink one cup of water (8 oz) every mile or 6-8 minutes (Nieman, 1990). To systematically hydrate during exercise it is recommended to consume 200 -400 ml of cold (40-50 F) every 15-20 minutes.

Should electrolytes be used during soccer practice or a soccer match?

According to Nieman (1990), studies have demonstrated that losses of sodium, magnesium, calcium, zinc, and some vitamins through sweat are insignificant. Therefore water is a sufficient intake for before, during and after a soccer match.

However, individuals engaging in very heavy exercise that lasts over four hours (e.g. Tri-athletes and marathoners), however, need fluids containing electrolytes.

Timing of Food Consumption and Performance

Pre-Event Feeding:

A diet high (65-70%) in complex carbohydrates consumed no later than 4-5 hours before competition appears to positively affect endurance type performance. The pre-event meal should not exceed 600 kcal and should be very light in fat (Keith, 1989).

During Event Feeding:

Numerous studies compared the performance of endurance runners or cyclists when either a sport type drink and/or diluted sugary drink or plain water was consumed. Even though results consistently show that carbohydrate beverages outperform plain water, no practical benefits seem to result from carbohydrate ingestion throughout exercise.

Post-Event Feeding:

Ivy, Katz and others (1988) studied the effect of time of carbohydrate ingestion after exercise on muscle glycogen synthesis. They reported that a 23% solution of a carbohydrate drink, in a quantity that supplied two grams of carbohydrate per kilogram of body weight, led to a 300% increase in the rate of glycogen synthesis. Following Ivy and his colleagues' recommendation, soccer players may consume 1.5 g/kg body weight carbohydrates within the first 15-30 minutes after practice or a game. A second feeding should take place about one hour after the cessation of exercise.

Why are drinking fluids so important when playing sport/football?

Fluids

Water is critical to all body functions and makes up about 60 percent of a person's body weight. Water helps move nutrients throughout the body and helps remove waste from the body. Replacing the fluids lost during exercise is essential to sustaining performance, preventing dehydration and avoiding injury. Even mild dehydration can cause muscle and body fatigue, which will reduce athletic performance. Since thirst is not always a reliable indicator of fluid loss, athletes should drink fluids before they get really thirsty.

Eight to ten cups a water a day is the recommended daily intake for most people. However, extra fluids are needed by athletes to replenish what is lost during exercise. Drinks with caffeine or alcohol should be avoided, as they are dehydrating. Exercising in extreme heat increases fluid needs even more, since more is lost through sweat. Taking in too much water can be just as dangerous as not taking in enough. Athletes should experiment with different fluid intakes to determine the best amounts for optimal performance.



Sports drinks can be helpful, especially for events lasting sixty minutes or longer, after the event. In addition to fluid, they provide the advantage of quick replacement of carbohydrate and minerals and also replace electrolytes lost

Fluid Intake Guidelines

Time in reference to event Ounces of fluid (oz.)

24 hours before Drink freely
2 hours before 8–16 oz.
15 minutes before 8–16 oz.
During 4 to 8 oz. every 15–20 minutes
After Drink freely

Ages 6 – 12

Before Sports

Drinking Fluids prior to exercise appears to reduce or delay the detrimental effects of dehydration.

- 1 – 2 hours before sports – 4 to 8 ounces of cold water
- 10 – 15 minutes before sports – 4 to 8 ounces of cold water

During Sports

Every 20 minutes: 5 – 9 ounces of cold water depending upon weight.
(5 for a child weighing 88 pounds, 9 ounces for a child weighing 132 pounds).

After Sports

Post exercise hydration should aim to correct any fluid lost during the practice.
Within 2 hours: at least 24 ounces of water for every pound of weight lost.

Ages 13 – 18

Before Sports

Drinking Fluids prior to exercise appears to reduce or delay the detrimental effects of dehydration.

- 1 – 2 hours before sports – 8 to 16 ounces of cold water
- 10 – 15 minutes before sports – 8 to 12 ounces of cold water

During Sports

Every 20 minutes: Between 7 and 11 ounces of water depending upon weight.

After Sports

Post exercise hydration should aim to correct any fluid lost during the practice.



ONLINE CURRICULUM

Websites

“Have you been coaching for five years or have you coached the same things five times?” (Nick Dunbar 2004).

My challenge to you is to find new and interesting practices outside the curriculum and deliver them to the kids in your program. Below are websites that I have used in the past to help me:

www.footballcoachingcourses.com
www.uefa.com
www.thefa.com
www.soccerrom.com
www.soccerhelp.com
www.flashdrills.com
www.geocities.com
www.jes-soft.com/soccer
www.coerver.co.uk
<http://www.coerver-coaching.com/>
www.soccerspecific.com
www.soccer-training-info.com
www.deatursports.com
www.ucs.mun.ca
www.footy4kids.co.uk
www.worldclasscoaching.com
www.betersoccermorefun.com
www.nscaa.com/tips/
<http://dmoz.org/Sports/Soccer/Coaching/>
<http://www.brucebrownlee.com/coaching/sites/coachinglinks.htm>
<http://www.and-again.com/socclink.asp>
<http://www.nasl.com/drills.htm>
<http://www.eteamz.com/soccer/pills>
<http://eteamz.active.com/youthsoccercoach>,
<http://peace2u.home.sprynet.com>,
www.ussoccer.com
www.usyouthsoccer.org

Some of these are better than others but I have found drills that I have used on almost all of these websites. You have to dig around on some to find free samples as; a couple of these are subscription sites (e.g. world class coaching).

I feel coaching is all about sharing ideas of effective practices. As a club all the coaches should use email to share areas of good practice with your peers.

I hope you have found this booklet informative and helpful. I wish you all the best for the season.