



CLASSICS TEACHING CURRICULUM 2009 U8

TYPICAL CHARACTERISTICS OF THE U8 PLAYER

- Tend to play well in pairs
- Are now able to take another's perspective
- Heating and cooling systems not totally developed (i.e. water breaks)
- Unable to think abstractly
- Prefer playing to watching
- Limited attention span
- Start to have understanding of time, space and sequence
- Many have incorporated a "third or fourth speed" – i.e. not just stop and fast
- Extremely aware of adult reactions
- Seek adult approval
- Begin to become aware of peer perception
- Wide range of abilities between children at this age i.e. "late bloomers"
- Some begin to keep score – most don't care
- Beginning to develop motor memories

FITNESS/CONDITIONING PRIORITIES:

- Balance
- Balance Games
- Mirror Games
- Obstacle Running
- Reaction Games
- Spatial Orientation

TEACHING PRIORITIES:

- Dribble with all sides of the foot
- Dribble out of trouble
- Dribble past someone
- Shielding
- Introduce shooting technique
- Introduce passing
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COMMENTS: *U8's work best in pairs. They are emerging – but not totally out of – from the "me, myself and I" mode. These players will get better if they are having fun. A "games approach" to training is recommended.*



CLASSICS TEACHING CURRICULUM 2009 U9-U10's

TYPICAL CHARACTERISTICS OF THE U9-U10 PLAYER

- Attention span is getting longer
- They start to think ahead and think “if this, then that”
- They are inclined to want to play instead of being told to play – we start to lose kids at this age
- Increased self responsibility
- Begin to recognize fundamental tactical concepts
- Become aware of peer pressure
- Begin to affiliate with their team or their coach
- Players are extremely “rule bound” – every rule you make is another bar on their prison
- A crucial age for technique/skill development
- There is still a wide range of maturity levels

TEACHING PRIORITIES

FITNESS/CONDITIONING PRIORITIES:

- Balance Games
- Coordination Games
- Stop and Go Games
- Agility Games
- Varied Movements

SKILL PRIORITIES:

- Continue working on dribbling
- Shooting
- Receiving- ground/ air – 1st touch & 2nd touch
- Passing – long and short
- Heading and Volleying

TACTICAL PRIORITIES:

- 1 v 1 concepts
- 2 v 2 concepts (Combination play)
- Introduction to Defending (Pressure and Cover) – “layers of defending
- Introduction of roles for attackers (First Attacker; Second Attacker)
- Introduction to Goalkeeping
- Introduction to Restarts both Attacking and Defending – i.e. short corner
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COMMENTS: *Coaches must be consistent in their approach to teaching. It is important here to follow a progression so that the concepts can be learned. It is important to continue work on technique in every session. The players must become comfortable with the ball!*



CLASSICS TEACHING CURRICULUM 2009 U11-U12's

TYPICAL CHARACTERISTICS OF U11's –U12's

- **Maturation at different rates**
- **Players need a warm up and cool down and stretch**
- **Begin to understand elemental abstract concepts and hypothetical situations**
- **They like to solve problems**
- **Peer evaluation is constant**
- **Egos are sensitive**
- **Coordination depends upon growth spurts and maturation level**
- **Technique must be reinforced constantly**
- **Playing too much will lead to overuse injuries**
- **This age is crucial in terms of burn out and drop out; playing too much, not having fun etc will impact these players**
- **This is the “dawn of tactics”**
- **Ask players to be creative and take risks**
- **Ask for feedback from players**
- **Try to hand over leadership and ownership of the team to them**
- **Keep it fun!!!!**

TEACHING PRIORITIES

FITNESS/CONDITIONING PRIORITIES:

- **Speed – including the change of pace**
- **Agility – SAQ – ladders, hoops, hurdles etc.**
- **Change of direction**
- **Balance activities**

SKILL PRIORITIES:

- **Continue with and review the U10 skills**
- **Speed dribbling in traffic**
- **Ability to chip the ball**
- **Ability to drive the ball (Long passing)**
- **Offensive and Defensive Heading**
- **Power/Accuracy Shooting**

TACTICAL PRIORITIES:

- **Communication**
- **Basic support positions (Attacking and Defending)**
- **Receiving a ball under pressure**
- **Combination play (With 1 teammate; with 3 or more teammates)**
- **Changing the point of attack**
- **2 v 2 and 3 v 3**
- **Passing for possession**
- **Passing for penetration**
- **Zonal defending**
- **Finishing from combination play**
- **Finishing from the flank**
- **Attacking shape (Individual, Small Groups. Team)**
- **Continue working on restarts**

COMMENTS:

These kids are all growing at different rates. We must be sensitive to these changes. Focus on finding the positive and keeping training fun. Some players will “catch on” quickly and some will take a little longer. BE PATIENT!!!



CLASSICS TEACHING CURRICULUM 2009 U13'S AND 14'S

TYPICAL CHARACTERISTICS OF U13'S AND U14'S

- **Team play becomes important**
- **Getting results becomes important**
- **Peer pressure is immense**
- **The players begin to “get competitive”**
- **There are physical and emotional changes that are important for the coach to understand**
- **Fitness and strength become more important**
- **The players are able to make decisions**
- **Confidence – or lack of confidence – can impact players**
- **The players begin to understand the concept of accountability**

TEACHING PRIORITIES:

FITNESS/CONDITIONING PRIORITIES:

- **Speed**
- **Strength**
- **Endurance**
- **Core strengthening**
- **Soccer specific running – i.e. shuttle runs**
- **Running with the ball**

SKILL PRIORITIES:

- **Technique in every training session**
- **Continue to review all skills with:**
 - **Game speed**
 - **Increased pressure**
 - **Increased demands i.e. time, space etc.**
- **Use of both feet with all skills**

TACTICAL PRIORITIES:

- **Attacking in final third**
- **Attacking in middle third**
- **Attacking from the back**
- **Changing the point of attack with a driven ball**
- **Functional training by positions**
 - **Outside backs**
 - **Wing midfielders**
 - **Center backs**
 - **Forwards**
 - **Central midfielders**
- **Full team attacking and defending shape**
- **Team defending**
 - **Pressure, cover, balance, depth and compactness**
 - **Defending in all thirds of the field**
 - **Pressing**
 - **“Soft defending”**
- **Can begin mental training**
 - **Fun**
 - **Imagination and creativity**
 - **Build confidence**
 - **Focus on the positive**
 - **Problem solving**
 - **Accountability**

- **Discipline**
- **Teambuilding**
- **Restarts**