



## Learn to Play the Ball

If we want to develop soccer teams that can possess the ball, connect multiple passes, control the tempo, the emotion and the rhythm of a game we must first teach our players to master the ball. Think of a musician that must master their instrument before they can be a member of an orchestra. What I have seen over the last ten years of working in the United States soccer culture is that we are so fueled by our competitive natures, the tournaments, the trophies, the accolades and the standings that we too often forget that developing the player must come before we develop a team.

If you were given the task of developing an orchestra over a three year period how many hours a day would you suggest a young musician should spend practicing their instrument? How many weeks or months would you suggest they need to commit to that intense practice before you would ask these young musicians to play together? When would you schedule the parents of your young musicians to attend their first recital or performance? How long would it be before you could expect eleven musicians to have mastered their instruments to a level that it would be appropriate to enter them into a competition?

If you apply the same philosophy that I expect you used for these questions ask yourself why we expect young soccer players to master their instrument