

Player Development Schemes In Soccer Clubs

Coaching Education Department
US Youth Soccer

*The Game for **All** Kids!*®

PLAYER DEVELOPMENT

- American soccer clubs must have a scheme for the development of all players, in all age groups and all levels of play within the club.
- The scheme must take into account the factors that affect the development of soccer skill.



PLAYER DEVELOPMENT

- Quality of Teammates
- Quality of Opponents
- Quality of Coaches



SCHEME FOUNDATIONS

- Age Group
- Level of Competition
- Length of Season
 - Frequency: Training & Matches
 - Intensity: Training & Matches
 - Duration: Training & Matches (Tournaments)

SCHEME FOUNDATIONS



■ Scheduling

- From the US Youth Soccer National Championship Series final backwards to opening day.

■ Training

- Preseason
- Midseason
- State/Regional/National Cup Competition

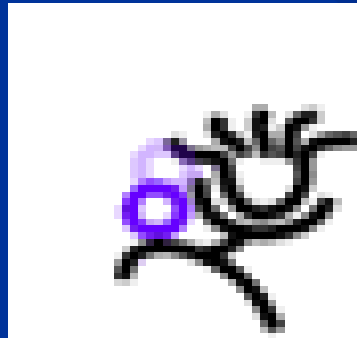
SCHEME FOUNDATIONS

■ Training Session Focus

- Fitness (1:4)
 - Strength
 - Plyometrics
 - Rhythmic Exercises
 - Tumbling
- Technical (1:2)

■ Training Session Focus

- Tactical (1:2)
- Regeneration
- Goalkeeping
- Team Building Activities



SCHEME FOUNDATIONS



- US Youth Soccer Olympic Development Program
- Scholastic Soccer
- Indoor Soccer
- Scheduled Time Off

Issues With Competitive Soccer

- The most talented players tend to play the most matches (100+) and are generally the least rested.
- By virtue of the number of matches played (& the minutes played therein) the most talented players tend to be under-trained (ideal 5:1 ratio; 10,000 hour rule). Most of our elite players never learn how to train in a professional manner.

SCHEME FOUNDATIONS

■ Matches

- Friendlies
- Regulation Match
- League Match

■ Tournament

- Who
- Where
- When
- Why

Recommended Training Session to Match Ratio

Age Group	Frequency	Duration	Ratio
U6	1 day/week	45 minutes	1:1 or 0:1
U8	1 day/week	45-60 minutes	1:1
U10	2 days/week	60 minutes	2:1
U12	2-3 days/week	60-75 minutes	2-3:1
U14	3 days/week	75 minutes	3:1
U16	3-4 days/week	75-90 minutes	4:1
U19	4-5 days/week	90 minutes	5:1

SCHEME FOUNDATIONS

- Parents Participation
 - Social ↔ Support System (Family/Friends)
 - Emotional/Psychological
 - Ethical/Sportsmanship/Fair Play
 - Process/Outcome
 - Short/Long Term Perspectives

6 TEAM SKILL	Cooperative	Confident	Application of Strategy and Tactics	Competitive	Players have to LEARN to compete together as a team – a slow process needing much time.
5 GROUP SKILL	Mobility versus Balance	Penetration versus Delay	Depth versus Depth	Width versus Concentration	Some will never LEARN how to be a “player-watcher” because of poor ball techniques.
4 INDIVIDUAL BALL TECHNIQUES	Dribbling	Ball Striking (Foot, Head, Fist)	Receiving	Tackling	Must be LEARNED – “ball sense” is not natural – best learned before 12 years of age.
3 PHYSICAL FITNESS	Endurance	Mobility	Strength	Speed	Needs little special attention in soccer training until early adolescence – until then, other factors are more important.
2 BASIC MOVEMENTS	Twist and Turn	Run	Jump	Stop and Start	All children can do these but MOST children need to LEARN the best way – some will never learn by themselves.
1 MOTIVATION	Aspiration	Persistence	Arousal	Social	Important throughout “soccer life” – much of it LEARNED in early childhood.

Eric Worthington, Teaching Soccer Skill (Edinburgh: Lepus Books, 1974), p. 49

Ages 4 to 9 Childhood	Ages 10-14 Puberty	Ages 15 to 23 Adolescence	Ages 24 to 35 Adulthood
<p>Mostly technical repetitions, psychologically friendly and positive, simple combinations, decision making activities. Individual basic skills with an emphasis on keeping ball possession. Lots of balance and coordination exercises.</p>	<p>More combinations on offense and defense. Many decision making environments. Psychologically positive with correction. Advanced competitive skills against match opponents. Tactically work on the roles of attack and defense and the basic principles of play. Exercises should focus on endurance, flexibility and speed.</p>	<p>Tactical application of ball skills. Intense fitness training now becomes a part of the training routine. Much of the focus of training is now on group and team tactics. Fitness training with an emphasis on speed, range of motion, strength and stamina. Emphasize now the mastery of ball skills and the match application of them.</p>	<p>Soccer is now either a recreational activity or a job. Consequently training will reflect this reality. Specialization in preparation!</p>

MATCHES	MATCHES	MATCHES	MATCHES
<p>Matches of 3- to 6-a-side. No leagues or standings! No tournaments – festivals instead. Many fun and competitive games. Gain technical skills and game insight by playing in simplified soccer situations.</p>	<p>Matches of 8- to 11-a-side. Selection (try-outs) should not begin until the U13 age group. Less emphasis on the match results and more emphasis on players' performances.</p>	<p>11-a-side matches with a strong emphasis on combination play. Matches should be used as a learning opportunity to execute new tactical concepts and team formations. There must be a balance between competitive matches and training games.</p>	<p>Play to win! Ability is measured by the result of the game and overall performance.</p>

SCHEME FOUNDATIONS

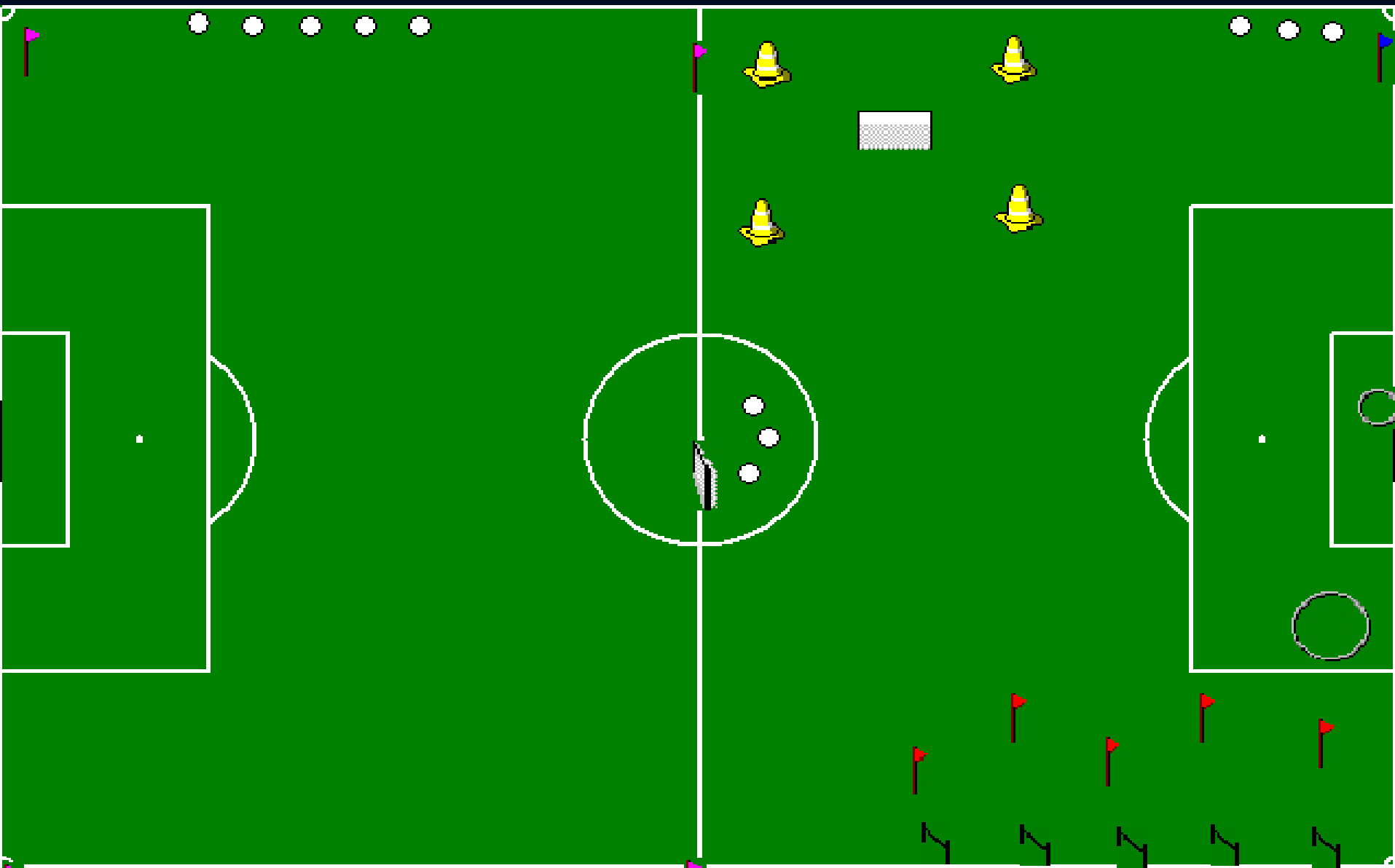
- Off-The-Field Habits & Influences
 - Nutrition/Hydration
 - Sleep Habits
 - Hygiene
 - Balancing soccer with academics, social life, family, work & other sports.

SCHEME INFLUENCES

- Player development is impacted by the club's ability to provide facilities & coaching.
 - Budget & programming
 - Affiliations & Relationships
 - History – Tradition

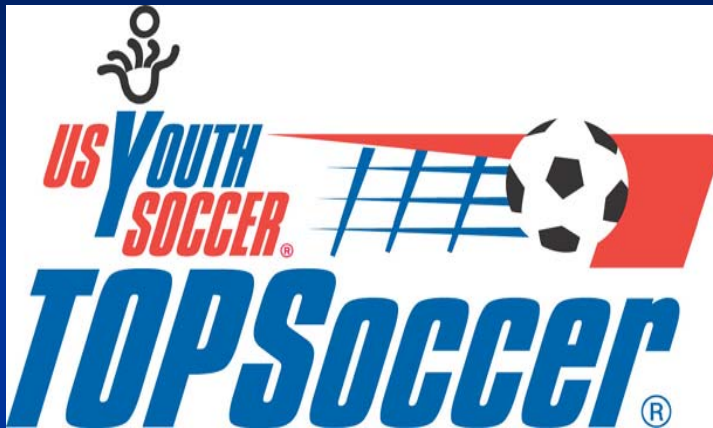
SCHEME INFLUENCES

- The club in turn is impacted by the existence/quality of the league/state/region.
- Geography, Population, Per Capita Income
 - Other Clubs & Competition
 - Rules & Regulations



Sam Snow, Director of Coaching

Extracurricular Programs



■ TOPSoccer



■ Soccer Start

Extracurricular Programs

- Speed Training



Running Mechanics

- Mental Skills Training

- Fitness Testing



Fitness Program



Extracurricular Events

- Social Activities to make the organization more of a club and less of an association.
 - Dance (holidays)
 - Picnic (crawfish boil, BBQ) – for coaches – for parents – for an age group
 - Soccer Festival – free play, skills contests, speed gun, moon walk --- celebrate the sport!
 - Match of the Week

Decision Making Formula

- Based First & Foremost on the Player
- Based Second upon the Team
- Based Third on the Club
- Based Fourth on Logistics and the Family

Player Development Schemes In Soccer Clubs

“There are many people, particularly in sports who think that success and excellence are the same thing and they are not the same thing. Excellence is something that is lasting and dependable and largely within a person’s control. In contrast, success is perishable and is often outside our control... If you strive for excellence, you will probably be successful eventually... people who put excellence in first place have the patience to end up with success... An additional burden for the victim of the success mentality is that he/she is threatened by success of others and resents real excellence. In contrast, the person fascinated by quality is excited when he/she sees it in others.”

Joe Paterno – Penn State football coach – 1990