

## Stafford Soccer: Technical Curriculum



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Sources: U.S. Soccer Curriculum

VYSA ODP Training Priorities

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## ***Stafford Soccer Philosophy and Direction***

Stafford's soccer philosophy is centered on creating a training environment that is professional, demanding, and reflects the demands of the modern game of soccer. Our core values are that the staff is teaching/coaching human-beings that have varied learning- styles, personalities and desires/goals. The club has an emphasis on possession-style soccer that builds from the back and has dynamic movement throughout the thirds of the field. SASA players are taught to master all the technical areas of the game, in order to develop, to the highest individual level possible and to be able to learn tactical elements of the game. Stafford Soccer has a development-first attitude which will focus on the individual first and the team second. In order to build a club identity, a playing style based on player development, rather than results of games is an expectation for all Stafford soccer technical staff as well as part-time coaching staff. Stafford soccer technical staff and coaches will "teach from inside the game" letting the game teach players as much as possible through the use of small-sided games. Stafford Soccer staff will encourage the sheer enjoyment of the game while developing our youth into soccer players!

### **Phases of a Training Session**

#### **Phase 1 (Warm-Up)**

Warm-up should include age-appropriate dynamic stretching (limit static stretching) U12 and under incorporate a ball as much as possible. The warm-up should be related to your session's topic when possible. Warm-ups should vary and end with a fun/competitive element.

Ex: two lines with various dynamic movements building to sprinting. U12 and under: players leave ball and touch two soccer balls before dribbling again while doing various dynamic movements along the way.

#### **Phase 2 (Small-sided Activity)**

Phase two includes: Smaller numbers of players and simple games, Size of playing area is dependent on quality/age level of players (smaller less time and space and bigger more time/space) Activity should reflect a topic of session. US Soccer advocates no direction in the exercise. However, in our club direction can be included in a smaller space. (Can you end in a competition?)

Ex: 5v2 (15yrd Grid) Competitive: can you get 10 consecutive passes, can you split the defenders, one touch etc.

#### **Phase 3 (Expanded small-sided Activity)**

Phase three is an expansion of your second phase of training it includes: larger numbers of players, space of phase bigger (keep in mind quality/age level) and should be more dynamic. Things should be kept simple but the exercise may have multiple objectives. However, stay on topic of session and conducted at match-pace. Coaching points should quick, during natural stoppages and topical. This stage should include direction in the exercise.

Ex: 8 v 4 or 5 v 5 + 2 (30 x 40 space) Possession game to end lines

#### **Phase 4 (Final Stage-Game)**

Phase four should be the game of soccer. (Scrimmage/Training Match) Two goals with all the rules of the “real” game and should be played at match-pace. Your effectiveness of your training session should be on display and coaching points should be kept to a minimum. The topic should be pointed out, in the “big game” during times of natural breaks. (I.e.; Ball goes out of bounds) *Phase four should include a cool-down that can utilize both dynamic/static stretching*

Ex: 6 v 6 to big goals (sticks/poles can be used)

### **U9- U10 Basic Stage**

#### **Training Objectives**

The training objectives for this age are to “master the ball meaning basic technical topics should be mastered. All sessions should be “ball-centric” and include a technical topic that moves through the phases of training. Pressure on the player, should be increased as players advance through the stages of being comfortable on the ball. The goal is to develop a high-level of individual ability (technical) as basis for a broad range of group (small) and team-tactical elements (large). SASA encourages creativity on the ball, as well as, age-specific player centered training where players are allowed to make mistakes in order to learn from them. The three phases of the game should be covered in all topics listed below they are: in possession of the ball (attacking) without possession (defending) and transition (attacking to defending or defending to attacking). Sessions should include an element of competition and conducted at match pace (where possible)

*“Technique, technique, technique; there is no tactics without it” Unknown soccer proverb*

#### **Technical Topics**

Shooting/striking the ball, finishing, passing (all sides of the foot), dribbling (close), running with the ball (speed dribble) control (receiving low, high balls) turning and fakes/moves, shielding the ball, heading: Attacking/ Defensive/ to retain possession.

#### **Tactical Topics (small group)**

1 v 1, 2v 1, 3 v 1, 4 v 1, 4 v 2, 5 v 2, 2 v 2, (+1) 3 v 2, 3 v 3, (+ 1) 4 v 4

\*\*\*Maximum even numbers is 4 v 4 (these topics are crucial building blocks to the game, do not move on until mastered) 4 v 2, 5 v 2, 6 v 3, 8/9 v 4 (introduce a neutral player until you get to bigger #'s) Combination play/movement off the ball (should be introduced in 2 v 1/3 v 4 v 1/ 4 v 2 and receive emphasis/repetition) Teach the Basic idea of the game "scoring and preventing goals conceded" Small-sided games (w/ two goals) that are player centered Possession games (no direction and directional) that include various topics: speed of play, circulation of the ball, penetration, switching the point of attack etc.) Topic: Introduction to Zonal Defending, Basic understanding match positions/roles in the three phases of the game. (Without the ball, with the ball, transitions (Att-Def and Def- Att) FUN games to goals! Children at this age love to score goals! Reading the game building insight and intuition

Formation Recommendation: 3-3-1, 2-3-2 NO SWEEPER

Training Time Allocation: Training Match 30% Tactics 20% Technical 40% Physical 10%

### **Developmental Characteristics**

Strong ability to learn new things, enjoyment of movement, competitive spirit, and coordination-related issues, poorly developed muscles, low concentration level, high-level sensitivity, and strong, uncritical attitude towards adult "idols"

### **Psychological/Physical**

Fun games! Games that improve: agility, balance, jumping, movement etc. Children should not be put through fitness routines that are appropriate for older players. These activities will improve team bonding and sense of belonging. Ex: tag, relay games, hand ball etc.

### **U11-U12 Basic Stage**

### **Training Objectives**

The training objectives are very similar to the U9-U10. In this age group players are to "master the ball meaning basic technical topics should be mastered. All sessions should be "ball-centric" and include a technical topic that moves through the phases of training. Pressure on the player, should be increased as players advance through the stages of being comfortable on the ball. Players should have one or two years with a professional coach which should increase the technical ability of the player. The goal is to develop a high-level of individual ability (technical) as basis for a broad range of group (small) and team-tactical elements (large). SASA encourages creativity on the ball, as well as, age-specific player centered training where players are allowed to make mistakes in order to learn from them. The three phases of the game should be covered in all training topics listed below they are: in possession of the ball (attacking) without possession (defending) and transition (attacking to defending or defending to attacking). Sessions should include an element of competition and conducted at match pace (in all

phases if possible; but definitely in Phase 4) off the ball movement, combination play, playing out from the back and possession should pillars at this age.

*“Pass, combine, play that is football to me” Xavi, FC Barcelona*

### **Technical Topics**

Shooting/striking the ball, finishing, crossing and finishing, passing (all sides of the foot), driven balls and longer passing, texture (bending) passing outside and inside of the foot dribbling (close), running with the ball (speed dribble), control (receiving low, high balls) turning and fairs/moves, shielding the ball, heading, tackling: timing, patience and technique.

### **Tactical Topics (small group/Introduction large group)**

1 v 1, 2 v 1, 3 v 1, 4 v 1, 2 v 2, (+1)3 v 3, (+ 1) 4 v 4, 5 v 5, 6 v 6\*\*\*Maximum even numbers is 6 v 6 (these topics are crucial building blocks to the game, do not move on until mastered)

4 v 2, 5 v 2, 6 v 4, 8/9 v 4/5 (neutral player can be used as well)

Keep away/possession games with no direction as well as directional

“Piggy in the middle” (5 v 2 and games with mismatched numbers)

Combination play/movement off the ball (should be introduced in 2 v 1 and receive emphasis/repetition in all phases of training)

Review the Basic idea of the game “scoring and preventing goals conceded”

Introduce players roles (attacking, defending and in transition) for weekend match-play

The concepts of Pressure and cover and Zonal Defending Building out from the back, keeping possession under pressure, winning ball back “6 second” rule, concept of low and high pressure introduction, Reading the game building insight and intuition

Formation Recommendation: 3-3-1, 2-3-2, 3-2-2, 2-4-1 NO SWEEPER

Training Time Allocation: Training Match 30% Tactics 25% Technical 30% Physical 15%

## **Developmental Characteristics**

Children have a unique ability to learn new information, a willingness to learn, improved concentration, focused interest, self-belief and confidence, balanced physical appearance, greater coordination, more competitive

## **Psychological/Physical**

The improved developmental characteristics allow the ability of the player to learn more specific elements of the game of soccer. Players should continue to work on various interesting circuit training scenarios that hit areas of speed and agility with and without ball.

### **U13-U14 Transition (Intermediate) Stage**

## **Training Objectives**

This age-group is transitioning between small-sided match play and full-sided. The developmental characteristics are in the transition stage as well due to puberty. Often, one will see players with drastically different physical appearance and maturity level. The level of play will be inconsistent and players with more developed physical attributes will tend to dominate match-play. At this point, technical and tactical understanding becomes more complex, therefore SASA coaches, should dedicate training to the technical and tactical demands of the game. Coaching to win will produce players that rely too heavily on direct soccer and the physical side of the game. However, players should be training in the areas of strength and endurance while improving speed and agility. Training the use of larger space, position-play and specializing in one or two positions will be introduced.

## **Technical Topics**

All the fundamental techniques in the basic stage should be mastered. Pressure should be increased to match-pace and space/time should be decreased (Technical speed) focus on the quality of passes over longer distances with various parts of the feet and textured (bending) passing/shooting. Additional Topics: First touch and vision, Receiving and passing under pressure with different angles, turning.

## **Tactical Topics**

Review basic small-group tactics, Larger space(s), positional play(Attacking, transitional and defensive roles), Tactical formations, small-group and large group tactics, combination play: 3<sup>rd</sup> person runs, possession over larger spaces/increased numbers, Zone defending, speed of play, transition, building from the back, switching the point of attack, overlaps, counter-attacking, team tactics: 11 v 11 systems of play and the role/responsibility of each position. Styles of play: target man, three forwards, two

forwards, one forward, diamond mid-field, flat midfield, 3 central midfielders, Reading the game building insight and intuition

Formation Recommendation: 4-5-1(in possession change to 4-3-3), 4-3-3, 4-2-3-1, 4-4-2 diamond or flat. All systems must use the “flat four” defensive zonal system. NO SWEEPER OR “DIAMOND DEFENSE”

Training Time Allocation: Training Match 30% Tactics 30% Technical 25% Physical 15%

### **Developmental Characteristics**

Puberty related issues, accelerated growth, impairment of coordination, frequent mood swings, ability to comprehend a more complex understanding of the game, increased self-awareness

### **Physiological/Physical**

Building the sense of “team” and fighting for the cause. Positive and constructive criticism handled with care and individualized, Circuit training that includes: speed, agility, endurance and strength training that are age-specific.

## **U15-U19 Advanced Stage**

### **Training Objectives**

The final stage of youth soccer players is the advanced stage, where players are asked to play at a high-level. Players in this stage should be able to pass the ball over short distances with accuracy and speed. Tactical (mental) speed should be at its quickest and sharpest, at this stage, in the youth game. Players should be asked to increase quality and speed of play while committing themselves to playing possession/attacking style soccer. The concept of team shape in defending, attacking and quick transition(s) will be emphasized as well. Possession soccer with good and quick soccer decisions, along with strong physical commitment is essential, to develop to the highest level, and should be cornerstones of this age group. Speed of thought, perception and reading of the game, are the main objectives at the advanced stages. Technical mastery of the ball is requirement to reach the highest level of the advanced stage.

### **Technical Topics**

Mastery and comfort of the ball, use of both feet, passing at all parts of the feet, lengths, texture etc., good first touch, ability to play in tight spaces, improvement of technical deficiency and consistency of technical qualities, technical exercises at Game speed,

### **Tactical Topics**

Execute concepts of Attacking, Defending and transition as quickly as possible, various Systems of play, pressing, decision making/speed of thought, zone defending/team shape, possession in cohesive multiple passing moves, counter attacking, playing out from the back with coordinated movement to enter/possess ball in mid-field, final third entry/movement, establishing rhythm and style of play, adapting/countering opposing teams tactics/qualities. Pressing: pockets, specific players and zones, GK incorporation into sessions, Reading the game

Formation Recommendation: 4-5-1 (in possession change to 4-3-3), 4-3-3, 4-2-3-1, 4-4-2 diamond or flat. All systems must use the "flat four" defensive zonal system. NO SWEEPER OR "DIAMOND DEFENSE"

Training Time Allocation: Training Match 30% Tactics 35% Technical 20% Physical 15%

### **Developmental Characteristics**

Players have developed into their teen-age years and can handle the most complex tactical scenarios. Male and female players have to communicate to in the styles appropriate gender, as well as, the individual's personality. Managing these components is key to building a strong player-coach relationship. Players should be asked to be committed to the team by attending training and games. Players at this age should be pushed to develop as soccer players to the highest-level possible of the individual.

### **Physiological/Physical**

Commitment to the team and the coach's objectives, team building exercises, Physical speed, agility, strength and endurance are major factor, personal/team goal setting, honesty and responsibility

*The higher the level, at all stages, the faster the speed of play, thought, perception, anticipation and technical ability increases.*

*"Every decision, move (on the field) is tactics" Dennis Bergkamp Arsenal/Holland*

