



Pancho's Coaching Philosophy

Soccer is an art and should be treated as such. The decision making, the technique (knowing the right skill to use at the right moment in the game), the bonding with your teammates, finding the will to carry on in the final stages of a game. This is what makes soccer beautiful – so why muddle it with wins/losses/draws so early in youth soccer?

At the earliest of ages, the pressure to win can become overridden by which player is the strongest, fastest, can juggle the ball the longest, etc.; and as a result, the wins determine the training methodology.

Players are forced to run for extended periods of time before their respective growth spurts to make sure they are “physically ready.” As most youth players have not undergone their growth spurts until past the age of 14, these training methods increase the rate of injury and cause youth players to lose interest in soccer when the desire to win overcomes the necessity to learn.

The most important aspect for youth soccer players is their ability to have fun playing soccer! Youth players are still learning how to train/compete in these crucial years in addition to understanding their own decisions during a game. The best way to learn how to play soccer is to play soccer! Activities replicating conditions within a game of soccer (i.e. an opponent, the ball, positioning, etc.) have a greater effect than players running laps around the field.

The coach must know how to engage players during sessions and understand that each player is unique. Each lesson or instruction given must be tailored to the player instead of adhering to a “one size fits all model.” A coach must have patience with their players and encourage creativity. Therefore, a coach must be proactive in their own education regarding tactics, technique, health, communication, teaching, and the psychology of the modern player. A struggling player/team does not represent an obstacle or failure, but instead, endless possibilities.