

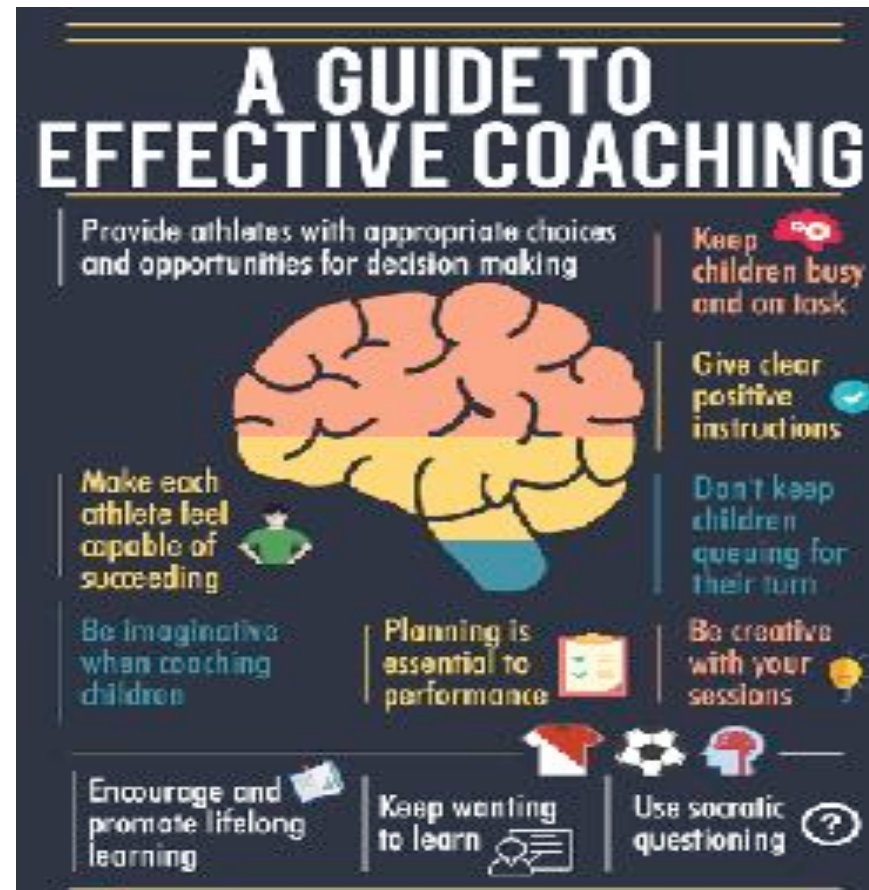


# Coaching Guideline U6-U12

# What do players want from a coach ?



# A guide to effective coaching



# Characteristics of U6 player



- Focused on themselves – reality to them is based on what they see and feel
- Unable to see the world from another’s perspective
- Everything is in the here and now
- Cooling systems are less efficient - need frequent water breaks
- Enjoy playing, not watching. Every player should have a ball in practice
- Limited attention span - keep directions concise and to the point
- Effort is performance – if they try hard, they are doing well
- Active imaginations – utilize their imagination in activities, and they will love practice!
- Look for adult approval – be encouraging when they say “Coach, look what I can do!”
- Unable to think abstractly – spatial relationships are a mystery
- Typically have 2 speeds -- extremely fast and stopped
- Usually unaware of game scores – keep it that way

# Characteristics of U8 player



- Enjoy playing in pairs
- Are now able to take another's perspective.
- Still unable to think abstractly – be patient.
- Cooling system still less efficient than adults – still make sure to give frequent water breaks.
- Still prefer playing to watching – keep everyone active during practice.
- Limited attention span
- Have an understanding of time and sequence – “if I do this, then that happens”.
- Some now have a third or fourth speed in addition to stopped and as fast as possible.
- Very aware of adult reactions – be very aware of your reactions.
- Seek out adult approval and need reassurance – be supportive.
- Begin to become aware of peer perception – a social order is beginning to develop.
- Wide range of abilities between children at this age
- Beginning to develop motor memories
- Some become more competitive
- Less active imaginations than U6 players

# Characteristics of U10 player



- Lengthened attention span - they are still in motion, but not as busy, only holding still long enough for a short explanation
- More inclined toward wanting to play rather than being told to play
- Psychologically becoming slightly more firm and confident
- Some are becoming serious about their play
- Team oriented – prefer team type balls and equipment. Enjoy the uniforms and team association.
- Boys and girls beginning to develop separately
- Developing the pace factor – thinking ahead

# Characteristics of U12 player



- All children are maturing at different rates and are sensitive to that fact.
- Need to warm-up and stretch as muscle pulls and other nagging injuries tend to become more common.
- Typically understand elemental abstract concepts and hypothetical situations.
- They like to solve problems.
- Peer evaluation is a constant.
- Egos are sensitive.
- Coordination may depend on whether or not they are in a growth spurt.
- Technique still needs to be reinforced constantly.
- Playing too much can lead to overuse injuries.
- Playing too much and not feeling like they have a choice in the matter can lead to burnout and drop-out.
- This is the dawn of tactics!
- Keep asking the players to be creative and to take risks.
- Ask for feedback from them. They will tell you how things are going.
- Try to hand over leadership and ownership of the team to them. They will enjoy leading and it will add to the learning environment.

# Practice Plan (3 P's)



- Play
- Practice
- Play

*This is an approach that gives the game back to the player, that emphasizes player development through playing while the coach guides the player through questions that permit the players to solve soccer problems on their own.*



# 1. Play (the initial play stage)



- Considered “Deliberate Play”. Empirical data has shown that children learn best when they get to experience periods of unstructured play where they can experiment on their own, it promotes enjoyment, inclusion and development.
- These three factors have been proven to increase motivation to continue playing. The coaches role during this Play stage is to ensure safety, monitor the games and “take the pulse” of the players. Monitoring the games includes making sure the games are not lopsided and providing adequate stoppages to allow the players to stretch and rehydrate.
- During the stoppages the coach is encouraged to ask guiding questions (Socratic questioning) to lead the players towards the goal and objectives of the session. “Taking the pulse” refers to checking the player’s involvement and gauging their emotional state through active or in some cases avoidance of participation. In short showing the players how much you care about them right from the start of a practice.

## 2. Practice (the practice stage)



- Considered “Play – Practice” using activities to create game-like situations that create problems for the players to solve and the coach to assist with the problem solving process.
- A simple checklist (provided in the session plans) includes questions such as: Does it look like Soccer? Is it organized? Is it challenging? Are there repetitions? (Of the topic being worked on) and Is there coaching? (Consisting predominantly of positive reinforcement) but should also include the normalizing of errors. (Mistakes are an essential part of the learning process).
- During this stage coaches are encouraged to set up small group activities that focus on the topic being worked on that day. We have also provided a set of Guided Questions that the coach can refer to throughout the practice session.

# 3. The (Final) Play Stage



- Considered “Contextual Learning” – In this stage we are checking to see how much if any of the practice stage has transferred with each player into the game.
- It is recommended in this stage that the coach sets up 2 teams of equal numbers and that one team is set up as close to the starting lineup for the upcoming game as attendance at the practice permits. In ideal circumstances (which rarely occurs) the coach should play in the game format 4v4, 5v5, 7v7 etc. that the players will experience in the upcoming game.
- The players should experience extended periods of uninterrupted play with the coach just monitoring the safety of the players and reviewing the checklist and guided questions to empower the players to solve problems on their own.

# Game day management

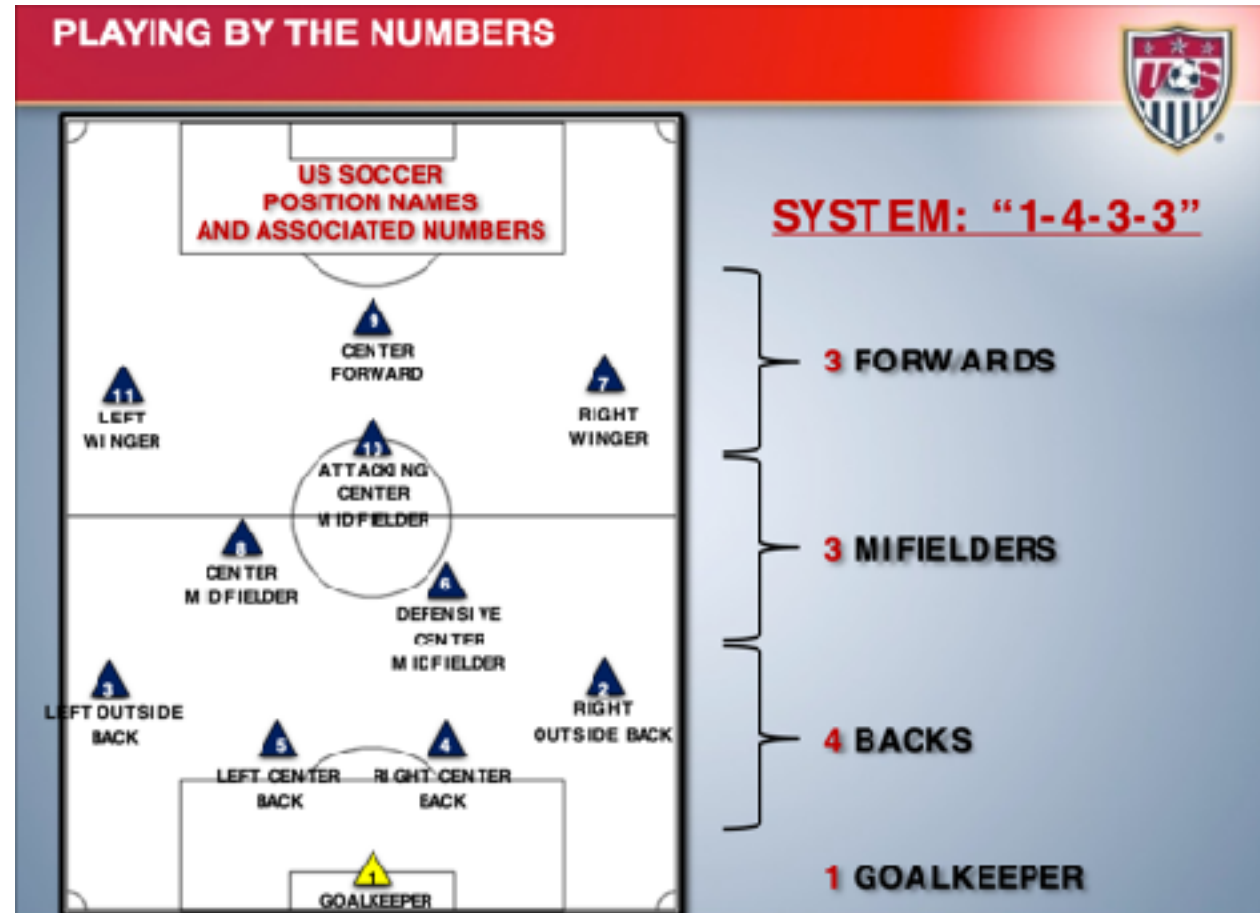


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## GAME DAY MANAGEMENT

- 1 TEACH FAIR TACTICS**  
When can you and your players yell? Keep it short and simple.
- 2 AVOID "BOY STICKING"**  
During matches, leave the tactical decisions to the players. Let them see their tactical solutions.
- 3 CONCENTRATE ON COACHING**  
Focus on what you trained on during the week. Avoid giving in to their tactics in the game.
- 4 STAY CALM**  
Developing emotional intelligence with their judgement skills of the referee or the coach.
- 5 BE POSITIVE**  
Subvert the temptation to vent. Praise your players. Coach them being good.
- 6 HAVE HIGH STANDARDS**  
Set high standards for yourself, the players, the officials and the parents.
- 7 BE A ROLE MODEL**  
Provide good behavior guidelines for yourself, the referees and all others on the field. Parents, spectators & the staff.
- 8 BE FIRM WITH PARENTS**  
Be honest and fair, yet firm.
- 9 COMMUNICATE**  
Have open lines of communication with your players and parents.
- 10 ENJOY!**  
Enjoy the work. Enjoy the game. Have fun!

# Playing by the numbers



# The parental role



Throughout a child's development the greatest influence on their sporting success will be their parents. It is important that parents understand the influence a role they can have both positive and negative effects on their child's sporting development.



Allow your child to take part in a range of sports.



Emphasize a "Can do! Don't Give Up!" attitude towards sport.

## Tips and Advice

Children need to know that they make their parents proud regardless of outcomes.



Focus on development and enjoyment.

Encourage, be supportive and don't criticize your child.



Help your child to understand the life lessons they can learn from sport.

Listen to your child and allow them to have fun.



Try not to coach your child as it undermines what the coach is teaching.

## REMEMBER! Be a positive sport parent!

Work alongside the coach and support staff to provide your child with a positive experience.

Allow your child to be the motivator. Don't over-encourage. Allow them to be coaches and take their own decisions.



Avoid focusing on outcomes and only on winning.



# The parent toolkit

**PARENT TOOLKIT**  
Supportive actions for the youth sports parent.

**1 CHEER IN THE PAST**  
 For things that have just happened, not instructions for something to happen

**2 ASK QUESTIONS**  
Let them bring their game to you 

**3 RIDE HOME PRIORITIES**  


1. Their voice
2. Silence
3. Your voice

**4 THE FIVE MOST IMPORTANT WORDS**  
I love watching you play. 

**BUILD YOUR LEGACY!**



# Signs of a pushy sports parent

