



Player Development

Training Sessions

The game of soccer is often described as a fast skillful and complex game defined as a game which allows players the freedom of movement on the field.

Whilst the game itself is based on the 11-a-side version, it is no wonder that various governing bodies have judged the complexity of this version as inappropriate for the development of young players. To this end, the Chicago Fire Club Development School at Highland Park will focus on small sided games and ensure players maximize contact with the ball.

Developing Talent

With the launch of the Club Talent Schools, this guide has been produced to highlight the work that will be carried out at the Recreation Center of Highland Park and how exactly we plan to develop talent at each age level.

Our aim is that we will be aligning technical and tactical development with the key physical development aspects related to young players. Through the course of the programme, we will also promote the mental, social and lifestyle qualities which underpin the development of young players at each stage in their developmental pathway.

By having a player centered approach, we are emphasizing the role of quality coaching programmes together with the right balance of competitive opportunities which is deemed correct for the individual player in terms of their age and stage of development.

To this end, our key objectives are;

- Support Player Development
- Reflect Club Developmental Principles of learning through fun and organized practice
- Maximize playing opportunities
- Clearly defined coaching program covering both technical and tactical considerations
- Structured talent ID program
- Gradual introduction to laws of the game
- Provide a structured introduction at various levels for a 'winning' mentality
- Promote a development culture which incorporates a long term approach for parents, coaches and most importantly, the players.

Functional Circuit

The functional circuit is designed to assist coaches planning their sessions. It is also used so that we can analyze sessions and see what the players are being taught and how much they actually understand. The functional circuit consists of 5 main points;



Warm Up

Commonly referred to as the 'activator' this ensures we prepare the players bodies correctly for physical activity.

The Drill

This is the main focus of our session. This is where we will teach the basic technical skills of the game. This will be the core basis for the session and will vary each week.

The Development

This is where we make the skill more in-depth and give players the opportunity to practice what they have learned in a controlled environment.

Game Related Practice

This is where players are put into a game situation and given the chance to use new skills to play in a competitive environment. In training, we will focus on 4v4 games in order to maximize participation and contact with the ball.

Cool Down

We will encourage young players to acquire good habits at a young age level and ensure they go through some very easy exercises aimed at reducing their heart rates before leaving the field.