



Player Development and The Art of Coaching

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Memorable Coaches

We all have former coaches (and teachers) that we still respect or ridicule.

Think of some...

What are the characteristics that define these coaches' lasting memories?

The Motivation to Coach

Why do **you** coach youth soccer?



The Role of the Youth Coach

How does **your** role as a youth soccer coach differ from that of a college or professional level coach?



Coach Development

Why do **you** coach youth soccer
the way **you** do?



Curriculum Development

By coaching youth soccer the way **you** do, what are **you** consciously or subconsciously eliminating from your player development “curriculum”?



Vision

How would **you** describe **your** vision of how the game should be played?



Vision

The most significant characteristic of any top coach is their vision of the game.



Vision

The coach's vision impacts...

The manner (style) with which the game is played.

The relationship between style of play and training activities.

Vision

When a youth coach's vision is based on the adult sport model, the disconnect will frustrate the coach and parents, and severely hinder player development.



The Basics of Player Development

Youth coaches spend too much time focusing on positional play and how to win games, at the expense of expanding technical range and broadening tactical insight.

**Most high school and college coaches
wish they wouldn't!**

The Basics of Player Development

Fundamentally, youth coaches spend too much time focusing on positional play and how to win games, at the expense of the players' enjoyment and fun.

Most soccer drop-outs wish they hadn't!

Economical Training

10,000 hour rule

#Practices in a week x #ball contacts +
#Games in a week x #ball contacts +
Soccer homework x #ball contacts +
= Individual Soccer Development

The Basics of Player Development

Priorities by age?

- Technical Development
- Tactical Insight
- Physical Development
- Psychological Development



The Basics of Player Development

Prior to puberty, there are two only types
of soccer players...

Goalkeepers

Field Players

The Basics of Player Development

Up to about U-9/10, every soccer player is intellectually self-centered and should be encouraged to dribble the ball.



The Timing of Maturation on Positional Assignment

Too many young players are pigeonholed into positions well before reaching puberty; before they have matured intellectually; before they have matured physically, and before they have had the opportunity to develop a unique playing personality.

The result is a cookie-culture soccer culture.

The Timing of Maturation on Positional Assignment

Most girls will not develop their adult bodies until around age 15.

Many boys are still developing physically as college freshmen and sophomores.

The Motivation to Persevere

70% of kids quit sports by age 13

How many of your kids will still be...

Playing soccer next year?

Playing in high school?

Playing in college?

Playing as adults?

The Motivation to Persevere

What are the key reasons why kids stay with, or quit a sport?



The 11 Most Important Reasons I Stopped Playing A Sport. (HS Players)

In order of importance....

1. I Lost Interest (Players Don't Develop Ownership)
2. I Was Not Having Fun (Adults Are Too Critical)
3. It Took Too Much Time (10,000-hour Rule)
4. Coach Was A Poor Teacher (Not Being Taught Basic Skills)
5. Too Much Pressure (Not Understood By Their Coaches Or Parents)
6. Wanted A Non-Sport Activity (Some Drop-out Is Inevitable)
7. I Was Tired Of It (Too Much, Too Soon, Perhaps?)
8. Needed More Time For Study (Changing Priorities)
9. Coach Played Favorites (Outcome versus Development)
10. The Sport Was Boring (Coaching Approach?)
11. There Was An Overemphasis On Winning (Adult Imposed Influence)

The 10 Most Important Reasons I Play My Best Sport. (HS Players)

In Order Of Importance....

1. To Have Fun (Related To Coaching)
2. To Improve My Skills (Related To Coaching)
3. To Stay In Shape (Related To Coaching)
4. To Do Something I'm Good At (Related To Coaching)
5. For The Excitement Of Competition (Related To Coaching)
6. To Get Exercise (Related To Coaching)
7. To Play As Part Of A Team (Related To Coaching)
8. For The Challenge Of Competition (Related To Coaching)
9. To Learn New Skills (Related To Coaching)
10. To Win (Related To Coaching)

Playing Time

What element(s) should determine playing time?



Soccer Fitness

What elements should be part of soccer fitness training at the youth level?



Soccer Fitness

How do **you** train soccer fitness?



Soccer Fitness

What are the physiological barriers to fitness development prior to the onset of puberty?



Divided Interests?

Devoid of adult influence, kids will play games; often for hours at a stretch.

When adults organize youth sport, drills typically dominate the practice environment and games are used as rewards for “doing” drills and remaining well behaved.

Natural Motivation

What was it about pick-up / street / sand-lot games that was so successful in developing generations of competent and motivated players?



Motivation and Learning Divided Interests?

What do drills teach?

What do drills exclude?

What age / ability level do drills start to
make sense to players?

Feedback and Information

What is the purpose of offering technical and tactical feedback?



Feedback and Information

What is **your** frame of reference for offering technical and tactical analysis?



Feedback and Information

What is “correct” technique?



Feedback and Information

What is **your** typical practice time allocation for technical development versus skill development?

How often do **you** stop practice activities to provide information?

Do **you** ensure at least 70% practice participation for every player?

Feedback and Information

How do **you** know when it's a good time to give feedback?

When do **you** want to know things?

How much information can **you** pay attention to?

How long does it take **you** to groove a new motor skill?

How many of **your** coaching methods can **you** change at a time?

Feedback and Information

Are **your** skill corrections based primarily on...

Technique-specific breakdowns?

Common mechanical principles?

Soccer and Physics

Ball inflation?

Generation of power?

Joints and leverage?

Ball contact and direction / trajectory / spin?

Balance and body rotation?

Weight transfer?

Feedback and Information

Do **you** think...

Every mistake should be corrected?

Most mistakes should be corrected?

Some mistakes should be corrected?

No mistake should be corrected?

Feedback and Information

Do **you** think...

Correction should take place
during practices?

Correction should take place
during games?

Feedback and Information

When giving information, do **you** provide

Knowledge of performance?

Knowledge of results?

Feedback and Information

What is a “good” tactical decision?



Feedback and Information

Are **your** tactical corrections focused on...

Play by play breakdowns?

Basic principles of play?

Principles of Play

Principles of Attack

Think “Forward”

Help The Player With The Ball

Spread Out Away From The Ball

Move With The Game

Principles of Defense

Stop Forward Progress

Help out Around The Ball

Squeeze Together

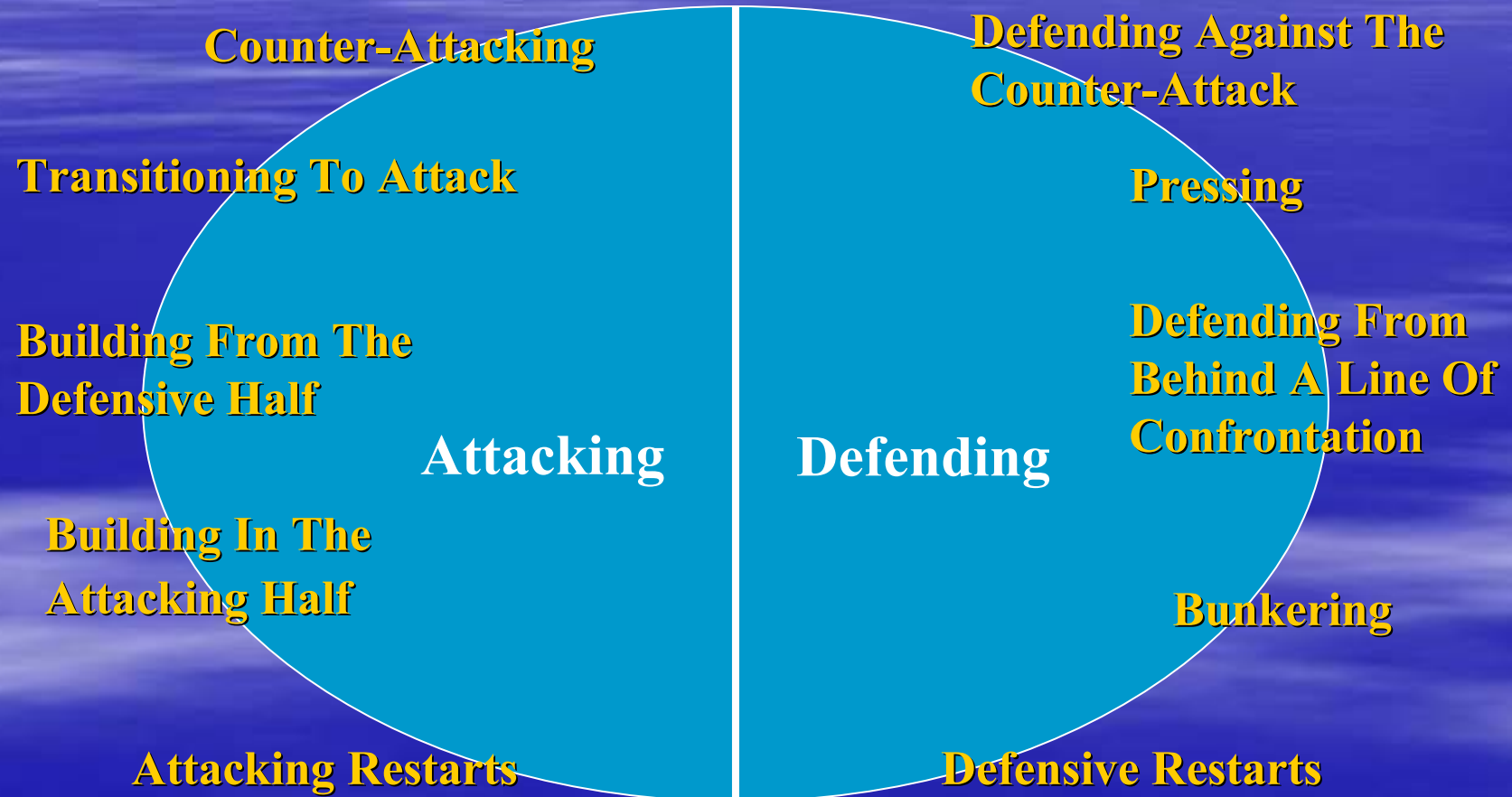
Move as a Group

Learning

What are the advantages of developing tactical insight as a natural function of reading the game's tactical cues?

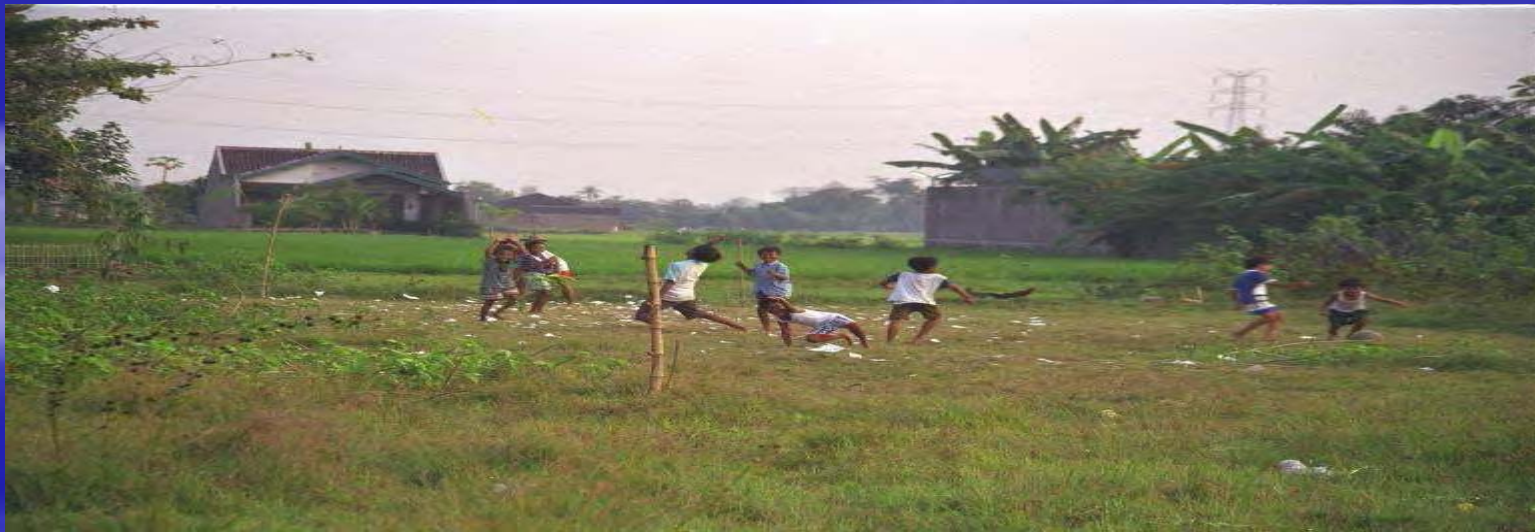


Phases of Play



Feedback and Information

Given the traditional coaching model, when do players get to make their own decisions about what they want to do on the field and when they want to do them?



Feedback and Information

What are some alternatives to coaches dominating the technical and tactical information provided to players?



The Coach's Tool Kit

Coaching individuals in the flow

Coaching the group in the flow

Coaching during natural stoppages

Coaching using conditions

Coaching using scoring systems

Coaching by freezing the game

Modeling Athlete-Centered Coaching

Have **you** participated in the discussion tonight?

What have **you** “learned” about yourself?
About soccer? About coaching soccer?

How have my questions change **your** level of attention?

Did everyone learn the same things?

Has the time dragged or flown for **you**?

Thank You for Attending!

Questions, Comments, Criticisms, or Witticisms?

