

Creativity – The Missing Link

US Youth Soccer
Coaching Education



Creativity – The Missing Link

- SOCCER – The grace of ballet, the fire of a mountain folk dance, the rhythm of boogie, all rolled into one and hidden beneath knee-socks and cleated shoes.

“Soccer is an art not a science and the game should be played attractively as well as effectively.

Soccer is a game of skill, imagination, creativity and decision making. Coaching should not stifle, but enhance those elements.”

Bobby Howe

Creativity – The Missing Link

WHAT IS SOCCER?

The beauty of the game is in its simplicity.

Within a given set of rules there are two teams who compete to score goals against each other.

Each team consists of eleven (or fewer) individuals who must use their abilities to combine cohesively while trying to win the game.

It's hard to play simple.

Simplicity is GENIUS!



Creativity – The Missing Link

- Factors stifling creativity in the American game:
 - Results focus rather than development focus too soon
 - Run-n-gun style of play (linear soccer)
 - Overreliance on athleticism (technique has been diminished)
 - Tactical impatience
 - Over Coaching
 - Insufficient caliber of coaching at Level 1
 - Club jumping/player poaching

Development with Excellence in Mind

CREATIVITY – THE MISSING LINK

Creativity – The Missing Link

Outcome Based

- The game is black and white
 - characterized by the score
- Questions to young players are about results only
 - Did you score?
 - Did you win?
- Success and improvement are measured by statistics
 - Won/Loss Record
 - Standings
 - Trophies

Process Based

- Soccer is a game of grey areas.
- Questions are about performance
 - Did you play your best?
 - Did you help your teammates play well?
- Strive toward excellence with success as a possible result

Creativity – The Missing Link

- Today we have stifled talent due to an overemphasis on the won/loss record!

“We are asking our players to compete before they have learned how to play.”

Jay Miller

Creativity – The Missing Link

- There must be a balance between the needs of today and tomorrow in order to have a healthy youth soccer experience.



Creativity – The Missing Link

The development of soccer players is a continuum. That progressive development overlaps age groups.

The following are your top ten objectives in soccer player development.

- Develop the child's appreciation of the game.
- Keep winning and losing in proper perspective.
- Be sensitive to each child's development needs.
- Educate the players to the technical, tactical, physical and psychological demands of the game for their level of play.
- Implement rules and equipment modification according to the players' age group.
- Allow players to experience all positions.
- Players need to have fun and receive positive feedback.
- Training should be conducted in the spirit of enjoyment and learning.
- Provide the appropriate number of training sessions and matches according to the player's stage of development.
- Strive to help each player reach his or her full potential and be prepared to move to the next stage of development.

Style of Play

CREATIVITY – THE MISSING LINK

Creativity – The Missing Link

- Players under twelve are routinely structured into formal positions at ages when their spatial awareness and technical range do not lend themselves to a practical understanding of large group tactics.
- Kick and Run Soccer does not develop the building blocks - close control, passing, dribbling and ball possession.

Creativity – The Missing Link



- The typical attacking tactic in American youth soccer is the through ball.
- Some talented teams overcompensate and play too much possession.
- A balance of possession and penetration makes for quality soccer.

Creativity – The Missing Link

“My ideal football is 70 % technical and 30 % physical. There’s too much running about in football today. Basic technique is essential. We don’t concentrate on improving it. You’ve got to start with youth teams. I’d insist on playing with three defenders and three forwards. Always one against one. That’s the way to encourage individual enterprise.”

Johan Cruyff, Dutch Soccer Legend



Over Coaching

CREATIVITY – THE MISSING LINK

Creativity – The Missing Link

- Over-coaching stops the players from talking and thinking since the coach has taken center stage. Players raised in that soccer environment become robotic and incapable of reading the game. These are reaction players who will always be a step behind an anticipation player.

“Over-coaching is the worst thing you can do to a player.”

Dean Smith

“Talking too much is a big danger for a coach. The words get lost in the wind.”

Sir Alex Ferguson



Creativity – The Missing Link

Half-Time

Is it a dialogue or a monologue?

Do we enable or shackle players?

Creativity – The Missing Link

Player-Centered coaching allows for training which empowers players to make decisions in game-like situations.

Empowerment in fact puts players on the front line of action in the game mentally as well as physically. This leads to better reading of the game and quicker tactical decisions. Quick thinking along with quality ball skills and athletic ability is the pathway to becoming an impact player.

Coach-Centered coaching at the extreme makes the players objects not people. Cogs in a wheel cannot create or solve problems for themselves.





Creativity – The Missing Link

"I use a global method. Yes, I use direct methods when preparing our organization, but I also use guided discovery where I create the practice, dictate the aim, and the players come up with different solutions."

José Mourinho

Creativity – The Missing Link



**Coaching with
Guided Discovery**

Creativity – The Missing Link



“Once they cross that line, it’s their game. It’s not about us as coaches; it’s about them being able to make decisions.”
Jay Hoffman

Quality Coaching at Level 1

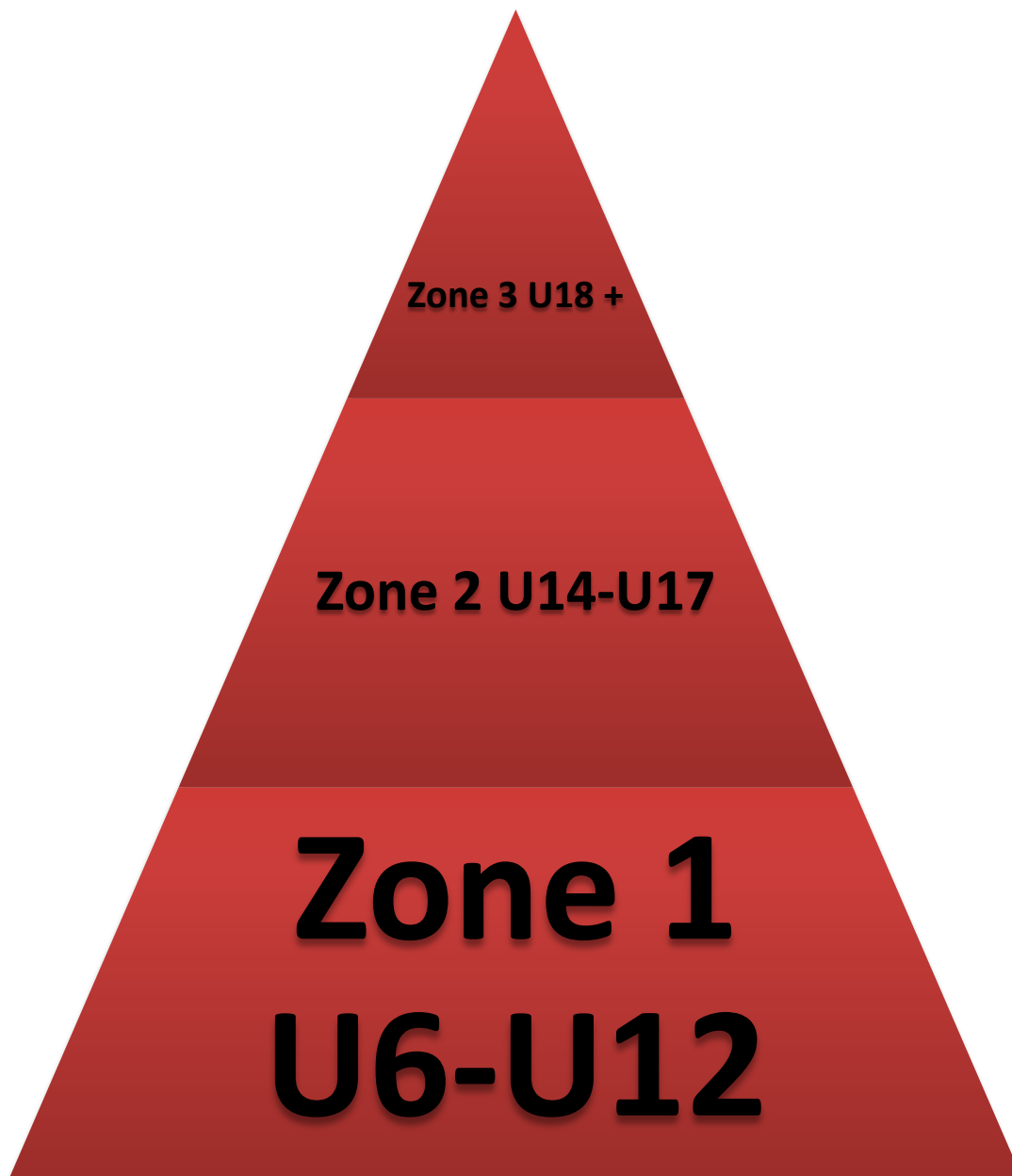
CREATIVITY – THE MISSING LINK

Creativity – The Missing Link

The grassroots experience is vitally important to instill a passion for the game, teach fundamental ball skills, establish core physical fitness attributes and expose players to game concepts.

If We Take Care In The Beginning,
The End Will Take Care Of Itself!

“...we must develop a culture and a way of thinking whereby highly skilled and qualified coaches are assigned to coach the younger players.”
Jeff Tipping



Creativity – The Missing Link

Coaching education is crucially important at Level 1. We must work together to deliver proven and appropriate coaching methods and knowledge to grassroots coaches through all mediums possible.

Club directors of coaching must pay more attention to these coaches and find ways to involve the club's paid coaches with the novice coaches and preteen players.



Club Jumping – Player Poaching

CREATIVITY – THE MISSING LINK

Creativity – The Missing Link



- Shifting from club to club by players and staff weakens the continuity of a progressive curriculum aimed to develop players and coaches.

Creativity – The Missing Link

