

Outline Progression for Teaching/Coaching Soccer from U6 to U19

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Every aspect of play coached at one age must be reinforced at the next age. Aspects taught at U6 must be taught again at U8, U10, and U12 and so on. What was learned at a previous age group or groups must be refined at the next age group.

Under-6

Technique: dribbling; shooting

Psychology: sharing; fair play; parental involvement; “how to play”; emotional management

Fitness: balance; running; jumping; introduce the idea of how to warm-up; movement education

Tactics: where is the field; which goal to kick at

Under-8

Technique: ball lifting and juggling; block tackle; receiving ground balls with the inside and sole of the foot; shoot with inside of the foot; toe pass and shot; introduce the push pass and throw-in

Psychology: working in pairs; sportsmanship; parental involvement; “how to play”; emotional management

Fitness: agility; eye/foot and eye/hand coordination; introduce the idea of cool-down; movement education

Tactics: being exposed to all positions; 1 v 1 attack; introduce the names of positions

Under-10

Technique: running with the ball; passing; instep drive; receiving ground balls with the instep and outside of foot; receiving bouncing balls with the instep (cushion) and sole-inside-outside of foot (wedge); throw-in; fakes in dribbling; introduce heading and crossing. For goalkeepers ready stance; how to hold a ball after a save; W grip; catching shots at the keeper; punting and introduction to goal kicks and throwing

Psychology: working in-groups of 3, 4 or 5; stay focused for one entire half; sensitivity; how to win or lose gracefully; sportsmanship; parental involvement; “how to play”; communication; emotional management

Fitness: endurance; range of motion-flexibility; proper warm-up and cool-down are mandatory now

Tactics: 1 v 1 defending; roles of 1st attacker and defender; 2 v 1 attacking; man-to-man defense; introduction to set plays

Under-12

Technique: feints with the ball; receiving ground, bouncing and air balls with the heel, shins, thigh, abdomen, chest and head; heading to score goals and for clearances-standing and jumping; chipping to score; outside of foot pass; bending shots; crossing to near post and penalty spot space; heel pass; kicking and receiving with inside of the instep; introduce half volley and volley shooting; introduce slide tackle. For goalkeepers footwork; bowling; low dives and forward diving; angle play; near post play; saving penalty kicks; introduce parrying and boxing

Psychology: teamwork; confidence; desire; mental rehearsal; intrinsic motivation; handling distress; how to learn from each match; sportsmanship; parental involvement; emotional management

Fitness: speed; strength; aerobic exercise

Tactics: 2 v 1 defending; 2 v 2 attacking and defending; roles of 2nd attacker and defender; combination passing; verbal and visual communication for all positions; commanding the goalmouth for the goalkeeper; half-time analysis; corner kick plays-defending and attacking; kick-off play; wall pass; beginning to identify potential roles for players-goalkeeper, defender, midfielder and/or forward; introduce the principles of defense

Under-14

Technique: chipping to pass; bending passes; crossing to the far post and top of the penalty area; half volley and volley shooting; slide tackles; heading to pass; heading backwards; diving headers; kicking and receiving with outside of the instep; outside of foot shot; dummy the ball; shoulder charge. For goal-keepers far post play; medium and high diving; parrying over the crossbar and around the posts; boxing and catching crosses; half volley (drop kick); kick saves; long over arm throws

Fitness: power; acceleration; anaerobic exercise; cardio respiratory and cardiovascular training

Psychology: assertiveness; tension control; self and team discipline; stay focused for an entire match; sportsmanship; parental involvement; “how to play”; mental focusing techniques; emotional management; self-regulation

Tactics: individual and group tactics; compactness; command the goal area for the goalkeeper; role of 3rd defender; how to make recovery and tracking runs; throw-in, penalty kick and free kick plays defending and attacking; defending the defensive third-center and flanks; playing in the attacking third center and flanks; post match analysis; checking runs; take overs; switching positions during the flow of play; provide offensive support out to the penalty spot for the goalkeeper; zone defense; introduce the principles of attack

Under-16

Technique: airborne kicking-forward volley, scissors volley, Bicycle kick. For the goalkeeper backwards diving; saving the breakaway; all forms of distribution

Fitness: vertical jump; body composition; plyometric exercise; Weight training; interval training; S.A.I.D. principle

Tactics: group tactics; role of the 3rd attacker; principles of attack and defense; diagonal passing; dribbling and off the ball runs; wing play; overlapping runs; defending in the midfield and attacking thirds; all possible set plays; match analysis; switching the point of attack; should be developing the ability to adapt tactics during the flow of play; key players should be able to dictate the rhythm of the game; command out to the penalty spot for the goalkeeper; provide offensive support to the top of the penalty area for the goalkeeper

Psychology: personal accountability; drive; courage; sacrifice in order to achieve one’s best; sportsmanship; parental involvement; “how to play”; emotional management

Under-19

Tactics: team tactics; tactical/technical functional training; specialized tactics for a particular opponent; midfield play; attacking out of the back third; should be able to adapt tactics and change team formation during the flow of play; playing a role; command beyond the penalty area for the goalkeeper; support the attack from the defensive third for the goalkeeper; combination zone and man-to-man marking defense; tactical functional training; creativity on the attack; total soccer concept

Fitness: overload principal; fitness tests; follow the U.S. Soccer Olympic Team concept

Technique: technical/tactical functional training; all techniques rehearsed at match speed and at match related and match condition levels; technical functional training

Psychology: reduce mental mistakes; control emotions during a match; dedication; commitment; take personal responsibility for actions on and off the field; sportsmanship; emotional management; “how to play”; parental involvement; selfless-team comes first

Even players in their twenties must continuously refine the techniques and tactics learned earlier in their careers. Players have a personal responsibility to maintain and improve their physical fitness. Social and emotional growth is a life long process.

Please note that the priority of the four components of soccer changes according to the age group being coached.