

TRAINING RESOURCES



Team Management Part 1

April 2009

Doc: TR2



Team Management - Part 1

Practice Management:

- Where Should I practice?
- How often should I practice?
- How long should I practice?
- What type of equipment should I have for practice?
- How should I structure my practice?
- What should I focus my practices on?
- What drills should I run at practice?
- How do I challenge the kids but still have fun?

Football Practice Planning:

- Football Practice Planning
- Should Football Players Warm Up and Cool Down for Practices?

Assigning Positions:

- The Goalkeeper (keeper)
- Outside Fullbacks
- Sweeper
- Stopper (centre halfback)
- Centre Midfielders
- Outside Midfielders (winger)
- Forwards (strikers)

Choosing Your Competitive Football Team.

What is Club Football?

What to Eat During Football Tournaments.

Why should football players eat foods that are high in carbohydrates?



Practice Management

This tip will assist coaches to organise a football practice based on the age of the players, and answer many important football management related questions.

This is the beginning of a three part series on Football Team Management. Part 1 is specifically covering practices and the coach's responsibilities in managing practices.

One of the coach's primary responsibilities is coordinating and organising training sessions. With this responsibility come many questions that I plan on answering in this series such as:

- Where should I practice?
- How often should I practice?
- How long should I practice?
- What type of equipment should I have for practice?
- How should I structure my practice?
- What should I focus my practices on?
- What drills should I run at practice?
- How do I challenge the kids but still have fun?

We have a lot to cover, so let's get right to it.

Where Should I practice?

Many youth football associations in the US will assign your team practice fields which are reserved by the association or they will give you a list of designated training areas. If your association does not have fields designated for practice use, you might check out local public schools, churches or parks.

The size of the field and whether or not you require a goal will be determined by the age of your players. Under 5 through under 8 football players require a very small area would not benefit by shooting on a full size football goal.

However, an under 14 or under 16 team would need a much larger field (at least ½ field) and would benefit greatly by having a full size goal for training purposes. As the coach, it is up to you to determine the best location based on your player's age. Be sure you examine the fields playing condition prior to calling a practice. Rough terrain or sticker burrs do not make for a pleasant practice.

How often should I practice?

This question is again determined by the player's age and maturity. Younger players from Under 5 to under 7 should practice 1 time a week. Players Under 8 and up should practice 2 times a week. It's best to stagger the number of practices with a day or two to recover from rigorous training sessions.

Try to stagger the practices such as Monday and Wednesday, or Tuesday and Thursday. These give you the best rest between weekend games and weekday practices.

How long should I practice?

This question is also answered by the player's age. The younger the player, the less amount of time they should spend at practice. For under 4 and under 5 players, often 45 minutes to an hour is ample time.

As I have learned from personal experience you probably will not want to go longer than that. For the Under 6 and Under 8 player you should practice anywhere from one hour to an hour and a half depending on your players. At under 10 to under 12, the average practice should be one and a half hours and can be extended up to 2 hours on occasions, but the players can productively practice for an hour and a half.

For players under 14 and older, a 2-hour practice is acceptable. Again, these time frames are general time frames and should be determined by the age, mentality, and competitiveness of your players.

What type of equipment should I have for practice?

The coach should always be prepared when attending practice, as he should always have the proper equipment. This list of equipment should include: disc cones, tall cones, alternate jerseys (3 colors), extra balls, ball pump, corner flags, and small fold away goals.

How should I structure my practice?

You should organise the practice as to have a warm-up, a teaching progression, a game-like condition and a cool-down. When warming up, a longer warm-up should be emphasized on older football players. Always attempt to organise the warm-up around the teaching of the day and warm-up with a related topic.

For instance, if you are focusing on taking on players, a related warm-up could be a topic related to dribbling. Next, Come up with a teaching progression that is from simple to complex. Sticking with the same topic of taking on opponents, we would start out in a 1v1 situation before introducing the 4v4 side of this topic.

Next, you will want to have a “Game-like” condition where the players are somewhat unrestricted and the kids play the game. The coach can step in and set expectations, however, this is a time to let the kids play. Last, the players should have a cool-down. This part is often overlooked; however, it is crucial for injury prevention.

When coaching, take advantage of teachable moments, express praise and not the negative, minimise the interruptions and let the kids play, maximize the amount of touches on the ball, and minimize the lines.

What should I focus my practices on?

As a coach, you should determine the age, ability, size, fitness, etc of your players, evaluate their weaknesses and plan an appropriate practice based on those weaknesses. Take items that went wrong in previous games and make that your practice topics.

What drills should I run at practice?

Football drills are an important part of football practices. A coach should always have a resource available to get ideas for new, fresh football drills. Variety is the key to keeping a team interested and excited in playing soccer.

Players don't want to see the same drill day in and day out and they will become bored with the drills. There are many online resources such as SoccerXpert.com, which provide a variety of drills and ideas to fit your age level.

As explained in an earlier question, make sure your drills are keeping topic with what you are teaching.

How do I challenge the kids but still have fun?

The coach should again look at the age and level of the team. If you are teaching under 4-under 8 players, the expectation level is low; however, you should always attempt to encourage the players to give more than they are currently.

For the under 10-under 12 player, the physical aspects of the training sessions should be greatly increased as the players will respond better to higher pressure. The high pressure on this age range should also be mixed with some fun in order to maintain their liking for the game.

For under 14 and older, the players should be able to be pushed the hardest at this age. With the increased expectation level, higher demanding drills and an active coach, the training sessions for this level can be intense. It's up to the coach to know their team and their limitations as to how far a team can be pushed. Make sure you mix hard work with good ole fun every once in a while to keep the players attention.

In conclusion of this part, here are some things a coach can do to run a more successful training session. The top two things for the coach to do are to set CLEAR expectations and teach respect for the game.

The players should always know what is expected of them. The coach should always demand that your team pays attention and players as well as the coach should always look the part. The coach should always project their voice and use dialogue that is appropriate to the age group of their team.

The coach must also be able to demonstrate moves, techniques or other teachable moments, or pick someone who can to demonstrate. The coach must also explain quickly and clearly what they want to convey.



Football Practice Planning

As a youth football coach you should always take time to design and plan your practices. Football practice planning can be completed a week or so in advanced and will make your life as a coach easier.

As a youth football coach you should always take time to design and plan your practices. Football practice planning can be completed a week or so in advanced and will make your life as a coach easier, and will make your practices flow much smoother. A football practice plan should a “one-pager” that contains short notes that you can fold up and put in your pocket or clip onto your coaching board.

When planning a football practice, you should design a session to improve a skill or tactic in which your team needs to improve. Whether it's on the team level or individual level, you should have a clear, defined goal of what you want to achieve. To do this, you must first have a good idea of your team's deficiencies.

Now that you know the goal of your practice sessions, now you must figure out what drill or game to use. Make sure the practice is in line with the age and ability of your players and make the relevancy clear and apparent to the players. Be sure to choose drills that keep the kids moving. Stationary drills with lines will only bore kids. Also, be sure to have enough footballs so that each player has a ball, as this will assure more touches on the ball.

When creating your football practice plan, make sure to include organisational items such as field size, placements of goals, and the number of goals to facilitate a particular skill or tactic. Keep in mind that larger grid size allows the players to have greater success, where the smaller grid makes the area tighter, decisions must be made quicker and is more challenging. Also, make sure your coaching points are clear and you understand how or who can demonstrate the skill or tactic.

Next, make it fun. Remember that the drills chosen and how you design your practices will directly influence the kid's enjoyment. Try to organise your practices where kids will look forward to your practices.

Remember as a youth football coach, you can be more than just a coach. Realise that these years are impressionable years and you have the opportunity to impact these kids' lives in other areas. Take this time to teach kids respect, responsibility, confidence, desire, work ethic, commitment and confidence.

MANAGEMENT AND PLANNING FOR YOUTH FOOTBALL

Should Football Players Warm Up and Cool Down for Practices?

Football players of all ages should warm up before EVERY football event and cool down after EVERY football event. The number one reason revolves around reducing the likelihood of a football related injury.

Although warming up is often overlooked by coaches of younger players, a good warm up and cool down should become part of a team's routine.

Basically when a player warms up, it does two things. Helps players avoid injury as well as improving the player's performance. We call it warming up because it actually increases temperature of the player's muscles. It also increases the flow of oxygen to muscles, speeds nerve impulses and helps increase range of motion.

Good warm ups typically consists of light jogs, stretching, along with light soccer related warm up such as light dribbling, skill work, or passing at short distances. Each warm up should be between 15 and 30 minutes and should be followed almost immediately with more intense practice drills.

The benefits of a good cool down after training also revolves around reducing injury and boosting performance.

The cool down does this by gradually lowering the heart rate, helping oxygen levels in the muscles return to the condition they were in before the practice began, while removing waste such as lactic acid. A good cool down also helps reduce muscle soreness after an intense training session.

A good cool down typically consists of a light jog followed by light stretching. So to answer the question posed earlier "Should Football Players Warm Up & Cool Down for Practices?" is a definite yes.

There are great benefits to getting your team into a good routine while warming up as well as cooling down before and after training sessions.

I recommend introducing a good warm up and cool down with under 6 players to build the routine now so they don't think twice about a good warm up or cool down when they get older.



Assigning Positions

One of the most important jobs as a coach is putting the right players in the right positions. At the younger ages, set the initial lineup is only a starting point for the game.

One of the most important jobs as a coach is putting the right players in the right positions. At the younger ages, set the initial lineup is only a starting point for the game. It is up to the coach to find each players “self-identity” and place players in the position that best matches them.

Players must have the opportunity to try other positions during the course of the season, as your team should be flexible enough to make changes as necessary to match up with your opponents. Some younger age groups might play without goal keepers, or not play with eleven aside; however, I will go through each of the positions on the field.

The Goalkeeper (keeper)

The coach must be very careful when assigning a young player to this position, and should only assign players who have had several practices playing this position and has proven qualified to play keeper. The goalkeeper should be coordinated, athletic, hands of a wide receiver and the courage of a hockey player. For younger players, players who play basketball often have good hand-eye coordination and can be a very good candidate as a keeper.

Outside Fullbacks

When assigning a player to this position, the coach should look for players who are defensive minded but pose a great attacking threat as well. The coach should clearly state the most important job of this position is to defend their goal.

Their responsibilities often include man marking, closing down attackers, supporting other defenders, watching backside runs, and winning balls. These players must have strength, speed, concentration, aggressiveness, decisiveness and a good understanding of how to defend.

MANAGEMENT AND PLANNING FOR YOUTH FOOTBALL

Sweeper

The sweeper's position is basically to be a clean-up man. This player's job is to be the last player on the field (not including the keeper) and is used as the last defensive measure. This position requires a VERY special player who must have a natural talent for defending and being positioned in the right place at the right time. This player should have speed, strength, stamina, awareness, decisiveness, confidence and a natural tact for defending.

Stopper (centre halfback)

The stopper is another defender who plays in front of the sweeper. This player's responsibility is to "STOP" any attack coming down the middle of the field. I generally look for players who are aggressive, strong, confidence in the air, and a clearance for relieving pressure on the defense.

Centre Midfielders

This player should be assigned to your playmaker. The center midfielder's primary function is to support EVERY player on the field (excluding the goalkeeper). They must be offensive and defensive minded, thus they must have outstanding fitness and good at possessing the ball. These players must have stamina, strength, speed, determination and confidence on and off the ball. I often explain this position as being the center of a wheel with an outlet to each player being a spoke on the wheel.

Outside Midfielders (winger)

This player is both offensive and defensive minded. The outside midfield player does not require physical strength, so finding a player that has good ball control, the ability to take players on and great fitness will often make great outside midfielders. This player is expected to be involved on the attack as well as defending, so this player must be fit.

Forwards (strikers)

This player is considered the main thrust of the attack and should be the player that naturally scores goals. These players must work closely together and share in the responsibility as feeder and goal scorer. When assigning this position, look for players who demonstrate good attacking ability but not much inclination towards defending. This player needs speed and strength.



Choosing Your Competitive Football Team

This Football Tip was written to help coaches while choosing players for their team using the TIPS method. TIPS stands for Technique, Insight, Personality and Speed. TIPS was developed by the Ajax youth academy.

The TIPS model is a popular method of spotting talent among young players.

The TIPS model was developed by the Ajax youth academy, which stands for technique, insight, personality and speed.

Technique is defined as a manner and skill with which the athlete employs their “tools” and “materials” to achieve a predetermined result. IT is much more than the measure of ones skill set.

Insight is defined as the quick and clear understanding of a complex situation. How quick does the player read the game and do they make the right decisions?

Personality describes the character of emotion, thought, and behavior patterns unique to a person. How does the player cope in difficult situations? Are they reckless or stable? Are they mentality able to play at a higher level? Is soccer a passion or pastime?

Speed is measured in terms of physical and mental speed. It is the most important quality of the TIPS model. Players must possess both physical speed (running speed) as well as mental speed (speed of thought process).

Possessing both physical and mental speed will allow the player to execute play quicker and allows the player to be much more effective.



What is Club Football?

Club football is usually a locally organised football program whose purpose is to provide opportunity for youth football players to experience a healthy, safe, and developmentally appropriate environment to learn, love and live the game of football.

The value of club football is usually related to access to higher level of coaching, year-round football, opportunities to play at a higher level of competition, and exposure to various venues. It is typically through football clubs where players get recognition and exposure to college opportunities and access to college coaches and scouts.

Because club football is year-round, club coaches are able to build on fundamental practices during regular season and off-season training seasons. Club football coaches often encourage players to get additional touches on the ball during down time to build stronger football players with a demanding control of the ball.

Club football coaches attempt to train players to their fullest potential while teaching skills, athleticism, tactics, teamwork and sportsmanship. Football Clubs often strive to provide the best football training facilities, coaches, teams and support structure to facilitate the development and to provide a positive environment for a lasting impression.

Club football is not for every football player or football parent. Most football clubs only consider players who have a passion for the game, are coachable, and can commit to year-round training.

Parental Commitment is equally as important as player commitment. Parents cannot be looking for the "silver bullet". They must understand that a player's development is not instantaneous but occurs over many seasons of proper instruction and play along with positive reinforcement from parents and coaches.

In addition, the parent's main interest must not be on position themselves each year to put their child on a more winning team. This type of parent behavior is detrimental to player's development and the sheer life lesson of working hard for something you want is lost. And in reality, the player who may show signs of "talent" at age 8 is not necessarily the strongest player by age 13.

In club football each player is an integral part of the team, and a team's success on and off the field is not dependent on just one or two players, but the entire squad and the level of passion for the sport each player holds.

Usually each club football team will build a budget based on the number of players on the team's roster. Basic cost for most football clubs include items such as: tournaments, league fees, coaching fees, referee fees, local registration, uniforms and any other club football activity the team plans to attend.

With higher expenses associated with club football come many opportunities to defray costs. Many football clubs participate in fund raising activities such as: hosting a club sponsored tournament, cookie dough sales, candy sales, working at local sports venues, or seeking sponsors from local vendors.





What to Eat During Football Tournaments

As a football coach, I don't have to tell you that coaching a youth football team while traveling in tournaments is a difficult task.

One of the hardest responsibilities as a football coach while on the road is monitoring your players' food intake. As their football coach, it is important for you as their coach to give the players a list of foods that will help their

As a football coach, I don't have to tell you that coaching a youth football team while traveling in tournaments is a difficult task. One of the hardest responsibilities as a football coach while on the road is monitoring your players' food intake. As their football coach, it is important for you as their coach to give the players a list of foods that will help their bodies recover quickly and give them the most energy for the following games.

First of all, some of the tournaments I have coached in often play games with only a brief time between games. This is often not enough time to leave the complex to eat. In this situation, instruct your players to bring energy snacks that are easy and are an excellent energy source. These snacks are easy to carry and won't spoil.

FOOTBALL SNACK FOODS

- Apples
- Bananas
- Dried Banana Chips
- Apricot
- Raisins
- Fig Newton's
- Graham Crackers
- Bagels
- English Muffins
- Blueberry Muffins
- Fruit sauce
- Oatmeal-raisin cookies
- Granola Bars
- Hard Pretzels
- Bread sticks
- Popcorn
- Cold cereal
- Corn Flakes
- Juice in a box
- Raw Vegetables
- Fruit snack

Here is a list of foods that are high in carbohydrates:

FRUITS:

- Apples
- Bananas
- Peaches
- Apricots
- Raisins
- Oranges
- Grapefruit
- Kiwi
- Pineapple
- Plums
- Dates

BREADS/CEREALS

- Bagels
- English Muffins
- Granola Bars
- Rice
- Blueberry Muffins
- Toast
- French toast
- Dry Cereal
- Pancakes
- Waffles
- Oatmeal
- Pasta

VEGETABLES

- Corn
- Broccoli
- Potatoes
- Carrots
- Peas
- Beans
- Cabbage
- Yams
- Cauliflower
- Turnips
- Green Peppers

DAIRY FOODS

- Milk
- Yogurt

Football coaches, make sure your team has this list next time they travel on an out of town tournament



Why should football players eat foods that are high in carbohydrates?

Find out what foods football players should eat and why it is important for football players to eat foods high in carbohydrates.

Why should football players eat foods that are high in carbohydrates? Carbohydrates are the most efficient fuel for energy production. They function as a readily available energy source as they are stored as glycogen in muscles and in the liver.

This is most beneficial for athletes engaged in strenuous exercise. With this being said, carbs may be the most important nutrient for sports performance. Some foods high in carbohydrates are: grains, bread, cereals, crackers, rolls, pasta (all kinds), rice, muffins, bagels, fruit, starchy vegetables, and low fat yogurt.

Football Players should AVOID foods that have high fat content or high in calories because these slow down the digestion process. Some foods that are high in fat or calories are: butter, margarine, mayonnaise, nuts, seeds, salad dressings, cream cheese, fried foods, sauces, gravies.

Football players should cut down on foods that are high in protein and high in fat such as: meat, fish, poultry, cheese, milk (unless skim milk), nuts, and seeds.

Another important nutrient is water. Dehydration, which is the loss of too much water, is the most common nutrition problem among athletes. Players should bring water to all practices and games and drink plenty of water before, during, and after practices and games.

For pre-game meals, make sure the athletes eat at least 2-3 hours before practice or game. This allows for good absorption.

Consult your doctor, practitioner, and/or pharmacist for any health problem before making dietary changes.