

# Stage 3 Coaching Guidelines

## Characteristics of the Developing Player

- Players are developing the capacity for more complex skills, but make sure activities still involve basic movements and soccer-specific skills.
- Players learn by getting many, many touches on the ball and by experimenting.
- Players should be given responsibilities for setting up and cleaning up.
- Players are developing stronger peer relationships; encourage them to partner up with all teammates at different times.
- Praise effort and risk-taking.

## Skills to Focus On

1. Turning
2. Starting and stopping
3. Quick feet
4. Dribbling
  - a. Turning
  - b. Beating people 1v1
5. Defending and attacking small groups
  - 2v2
  - 3v3
6. Receiving with the feet, thigh, chest, and head
7. Passing short and longer distances
8. Shooting
9. Rules and ethics of the game

## Practice Principles

1. Make activities realistic to the game
2. Practice twice per week for 90 minutes.
3. Every player should have a ball for part of a practice. Small group work should come during the final half of practice.
4. Avoid lines when you can. If you must put players in lines, limit them to just four players.
5. Keep activities to no more than 10-15 minutes.
6. Come to practice with a plan and set up early. This will reduce breaks and the distractions that go with them.
7. Give players lots of repetitions at everything.
8. When correcting players, always tell them what they *should* do, rather than what they should *not* do.

## What They Should Learn

- ✓ 1v1 attacking and defending basics.
- ✓ Small groups attacking and defending
- ✓ Creating triangles and diamonds on the field when attacking and defending.
- ✓ Look for penetrating ball movement through the lines
- ✓ Simple movements in relation to the ball.

# Stage 3

## (U9 & U10)

An 8- or 9-year-old is able to accept moderate responsibilities. Peer groups become more important and the child will identify with other youngsters of the same sex and with similar interests and activities. As friendships are developing and players are becoming more reliant on their peers it is important for team selection to be handled sensitively. Pushing too hard or expecting too much can result in the child becoming tense and nervous. The reason why so many athletes plateau during the later stages of their careers is primarily because of an overemphasis on competition instead of training during this important period in their development.

### ***What you need to know about development***

Skill development for players at Stage 3 is best achieved through the combination of quality instruction by qualified and experienced coaches and unstructured play in a safe and challenging environment. A significant emphasis of development should be on the continued emphasis on fundamental movement skills and basic soccer skills. For the sake of the child and the benefit of the soccer player, children should be encouraged to play a variety of sports year round. Players start to demonstrate a strong sense of fairness and to this end they should be introduced to simple rules and ethics of the game.

The competitive landscape changes at this age, with players choosing between challenge and recreation teams – not only are the levels of play different, but also the emphasis placed on player commitment and the quality of coaching received. Few youth programs consider the difficulties faced by early and late developers. Players who develop later or who simply choose to stay at the recreational level must continue to receive strong coaching.

### ***Translation to Player Development***

With appropriate coaching and focus on fundamental movement and basic soccer skills at Stage 1 and 2, the Stage 3 player begins showing signs of the more advanced soccer we expect of mature players. A player in possession might be thinking of passing to a team mate and might understand the need to support in attack and defense. Players will have greater awareness for the team, allowing coaches to develop simple tactics. However, coaches must not abandon individual skill development and this focus must continue to take precedence over team tactics.

Translated to player development, this means:

- Performing lower intensity activity for at least an hour
- Including speed and endurance activities to train and enhance the development of the energy systems
- Being conscious that early developers will dominate other players by virtue of their size and speed

- Ensuring that evaluations are based on several factors, including execution of technique and understanding the game
- Players at this stage in their development cannot maintain exercise intensities or durations that players in the next stage can
- Focusing on technical training and encouraging players to practice at home and informally; skills such as juggling and 'freestyle' moves should be encouraged
- Incorporating warm-up activities to raise body temperature and heart rate
- Encouraging players to drink plenty of fluids prior to practices/games and to replenish lost fluids during and post activity
- Emphasizing correct technique to complement the development of neural pathways
- Progressing toward small sided games/activities – 2v1 and 3v2 with a plus player are excellent ways to introduce introductory tactics
- Changing activities regularly to maintain interest
- Encouraging and rewarding creativity in practice and games.
- Accommodating different learning styles and employing different coaching methodologies
- Praising and rewarding effort and creating many opportunities for success.
- Focusing on strengths to promote confidence and self-esteem
- Setting goals and high expectations for all players
- Encouraging players to engage in unstructured physical play

### ***Tactical Focus***

At this age, players should focus on:

- Balance in relation to the ball (creating triangles or diamonds in both attack and defense)
- Basic movements coordinated with teammates both with and without the ball (i.e. "When your teammate dribbles toward the corner, you should move to the middle to look for a pass and shot")

## ***Player Competencies and Assessment***

The JASA Player Development Curriculum offers parents and coach comfort by knowing there is a plan to guide a child's soccer playing experience from the time they enter the program to the end of their youth playing experience. Part of this planning process is identifying the performance expectations/competencies for each stage of development. In addition, regular player assessment will enable coaches to know a player's ability and take the necessary steps to provide appropriate instruction. Assessment also allows coaches to provide feedback to parents regarding a child's progress and identifies how they can help in the player's development.

With this in mind, the following table provides players, parents, coaches and administrators with a comprehensive list of soccer competencies (skills, techniques, knowledge, tactics) for Stage 3. The matrix represents the recommended time for introducing a competency (+) and the time when the player should become competent (✓). Note players are not expected to become competent in many competencies by the end of Stage 3.

Stage 3 Competencies Matrix

<b>Stage/Chronological Age</b>	<b>U9</b>	<b>U10</b>
<b>Movement Skills</b>		
Jump - stride and bound patterns	✓	
Jump – hurdles	Ongoing	
Speed - Coordination of arms and legs	Ongoing	
Speed - explosive first step	Ongoing	
Running technique	Ongoing	
Sprinting technique	Ongoing	
<b>Dribbling Skills</b>		
Ball manipulation	Ongoing	
Turns – advanced		✓
Running with the ball		✓
Feints and dribble	Ongoing	
Beating an opponent	Ongoing	
Escaping an opponent	Ongoing	
<b>Receiving</b>		

Control – foot	Ongoing	
Control – thigh	Ongoing	
Control – chest	+	
<b>Stage/Chronological Age</b>	<b>U9</b>	<b>U10</b>
Control – head	+	
<b>Passing</b>		
Ground - Inside of foot - 5 yards		✓
Ground - Inside of foot - 10 yards	Ongoing	
Ground - Inside of foot - 20 yards	Ongoing	
Ground – Instep	Ongoing	
Long pass	+	
Chip/lofted pass	+	
Swerve pass – inside of foot	+	
Swerve pass – outside of foot	+	
Crossing		+
<b>Shooting</b>		
Instep	Ongoing	
Half-volley	+	
Volley	+	
One on one with Goal Keeper	+	
<b>Heading</b>		
Basic technique	Ongoing	
Defensive header		+
Attacking header		+
<b>Physical Conditioning</b>		

Body weight strength exercises	+	
Core strength exercises	+	
Flexibility		+
Aerobic Endurance training		+
Anaerobic Endurance training		+
<b>Stage/Chronological Age</b>	<b>U9</b>	
Speed training (Anaerobic)	Ongoing	
<b>Mental/Cognitive conditioning</b>		
Confidence	Ongoing	
Commitment	Ongoing	
Concentration	+	
Composure	+	
<b>Goalkeeping</b>		
Basic catching technique	Ongoing	
Positioning	Ongoing	
Diving		+
Distribution		+
<b>Set Plays</b>		
Throw in	+	✓
Corners	+	
<b>Attacking Principles and Techniques</b>		
Support with and without the ball		+
Communication		+
Positional play		+
<b>Defensive principles and techniques</b>		

Marking		+
Covering		+
Applying pressure		+
Support		+
Recovery		+
Communication		+
Positional play		+
<b>Stage/Chronological age</b>	<b>U9</b>	<b>U10</b>
<b>Laws of the Game</b>		
Individual and team behavior	Ongoing	
Field and equipment	+	
Restarts	Ongoing	
Fair and foul play	Ongoing	
Basic rules	Ongoing	

Key:

(+) Introduction of the skill, techniques, knowledge & tactics

(✓) Expected time when the average player should become competent

Consolidation = period between + & ✓

## **Programming for Stage 3**

### ***3<sup>rd</sup> Grade to 4<sup>th</sup> Grade Program—U9 to U10***

- *Format:* Gender specific (Boys or Girls) – Players are rostered on teams and also participate in age-level training sessions within their respective club program.
- *Ratio:* 1 coach per team at age level in select and academy programs
  - At the Recreation Level, parent volunteers coach the team with support of trainers and Club Directors
  - At the Select Level, parent volunteers will coach the team with support of trainers and select director of player development
  - At the Academy Level, paid coaches will coach players under the supervision of the Academy Director
  - Maximum roster size of 12 players per team.
- *Session duration:* 90-120 minutes
- *Regular Season:* Spring (12 weeks) & fall (12 weeks) 3 month season

### ***Additional programming: Optional Winter Program***

- *Training to match ratio:*
  - Two training sessions per week and games/tournament play on weekends
  - In the Academy Program (U8-U10) players will have the option to attend an additional practice
  - Two training sessions during the week and game/tournament play on weekends.
  - Players will be given opportunities to train with other teams.
- *Assessment:* Players will be assessed at least three times during the season and be given an assessment form for each evaluation period.



# Select Program Overview

Previously, the model for building a successful soccer club in America has involved one coach for one team, where, within this team, the coach was king and almost entirely independent. At JASA, we feel that this structure has become long outdated and that a new approach focusing on true player development is required.

The most innovative clubs are organizing their teams and staff into “programs” that cover multiple age groups. This means that the staff of coaches is responsible for players and teams over multiple age groups.

Our program takes a curriculum approach to learning soccer, similar to what you might see in an educational setting. Players have key competencies that they are expected to learn at each age level in the club from U4 to U18. We feel that this player development approach gives our players age appropriate training as well as a clear pathway to ensure successful soccer development.

## Program Placement

Select Program teams are determined by the results of our tryout process. At each level in our program, there will be two/three tryout sessions. It is highly recommended that the players attend both tryout sessions to give our staff an accurate picture of their playing ability. The tryout is used to determine soccer playing ability, which is our main criterion in forming teams.

It is our intention to have multiple teams at each level wherever possible. These teams will be ability based with the strongest players on the JASA Surge team, and the next group of players on the White team. At the U11 and U12 age levels, there is also a strong possibility we will have a White team as numbers permit.

All team offers will be posted on the JASA website after the tryout period and acceptance of the offer by the player will be required within 24 hours to have a spot in the Select Program.

## Program Expectations

Upon acceptance onto a team in the program, it is the understanding of the player and parents that the program commitment is for the entire season, which runs from August 1 through June 31 of the following calendar year. Player development is the goal of our program and we want our players to improve on their level of play. In order to achieve this goal, each player is expected to attend ALL club required practices and games.

## Program Training Approach

Our training program is designed with player development in mind. In the Select Program, players are required to train with our coaching staff two/three times per week. This is the minimum standard asked of players. Those desiring to train more will be given the opportunity to do so. We view training sessions as our primary tool to further the development of the individual player. While the tryout session in May will determine team placement for the season, we will use a club wide ability-based model during the season. In this set-up, player assessments will determine player groupings for one weekly training session with a club coach. This session will be tailored to meet the individual needs of the player. On the other night of the week, players will train with their rostered team and coach.

## League Match Play and Placement

After the tryout period, teams will be placed by the club into an appropriate level of competitive play in NCYSA leagues. Games are typically scheduled for Saturdays and Sundays but can also be during the week. Depending on League placement and teams within that league, games can be scheduled for the Eastern half of the state or occur in other locations across the state.

In the Select Program, our policy will be to let deserving players play up in age. Those players with an exemplary attitude, playing ability, and desire to do so will be offered by the club, opportunities to play competitive matches at a higher age level.

Offers to play up will be the sole decision of the Director of Coaching, in consultation with the club coaching staff. We will not take requests from families to play up. Rather, we consider this to be, a privilege earned by the player and offered by the club.

## Tournaments

Each team is expected to participate in two tournaments in the Fall and two tournaments in the Spring. Tournament participation will be in the North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, Virginia area and is at the Director of Coaching and team coach's discretion. Additional tournament participation beyond four is at the parents cost and the discretion of the coach

## Training Overview & Coaching Assignments

In our Select Soccer Program, we do not operate as loosely connected teams following separate and individual agendas. Instead, we believe in adhering to a single, program-wide playing philosophy and style. This philosophy and style is defined by the Director of Coaching and is implemented by all members of the Select Program coaching staff. This helps create a consistent learning environment throughout the program for all of our players. We feel there are great advantages to developing individual players within a "true club" environment. Our emphasis on club unity will be evident in everything we do including:

- Consistent use of our club logo and colors: Red, Black, and White
  - Uniform appearance of all players and coaches at training sessions and games
  - Players are considered members of our club program, not just a particular team
  - Players are trained collectively by age group as well as within teams
  - We are one program, one club, and one community of soccer players
- We believe that competitive players deserve to have an independent and professional coaching staff responsible for evaluating them at all times, in order to preserve the integrity of the environments that we place them in. We believe that competitive challenges are healthy for players and allow them to grow. We can and will challenge our players by allowing them opportunities to "train up" and "play up" when warranted by their play. Our goal is to create an environment and culture that will stimulate the growth of all players by allowing every player in our program the chance to play at their ability level in training and matches.

While we demand that our players strive to win every time they take the field for training and games, winning is not the primary objective for the program coaching staff. Our primary objective is centered around, and driven by, our goal of developing the individual skill level of each player. We do this by building a competitive environment focused solely on player development. We believe that winning games will ultimately be the byproduct of our ability to develop well-rounded players. Many of our teams have already achieved success in league play and tournaments. Therefore, winning every game will not be our primary objective and will not be how we measure our success as a program and as a club.

## Differentiated Training Curriculum

Our player development mission statement emphasizes the fact that in Jacksonville Area Soccer Association our top priority is true player development. We believe that this best occurs through club identity taking priority over team identity and having complete unity amongst our players, parents, and coaches. Our training seeks to achieve this mission through the use of a curriculum approach, similar to what you might see in an educational setting. We view the club as an institution that has the ability to create a tremendously positive impact upon the lives of our players and our goal is to create members for "life". Our curriculum is differentiated to meet the individual needs of our players while at the same time developing team concepts, and required physical and psychological aspects. Players in the select program are asked to participate in trainings two/four nights week during the season and also commit to a schedule of games and tournaments on weekends.