



SELECT PROGRAM AND PLAYER DEVELOPMENT OVERVIEW

To facilitate the development of our players and to continue pushing them forward, the Iowa Rush provides its players a wide array of methods and activities for this purpose. This is done with the goal of developing players consistently in the four pillars of the game: Technical, Tactical, Psychological, and Physical. The basic definitions of these pillars are:

Technical- A player's ability to manipulate and control the ball. Typical areas include: Dribbling, Passing, and Ball Striking.

Tactical- Understanding and reading of the game related to general areas such as: Positioning, Movement, and Transition.

Psychological- The attitude a player displays specifically as it relates to areas such as: Passion, Work Ethic, Being Coachable, and Leadership.

Physical- The components of athleticism that are valued in the game. These would include: Agility, Acceleration, and Endurance.

The following provides an outline of the different things we incorporate into our overall player development model in order to assist players progressing within these four pillars:

CLUB CURRICULUM

The Iowa Rush has put together and continues to cultivate a training curriculum which provides its players a pathway to overall development. This facilitates players building a solid foundation in the basic components of the game during their first years in the Select Program in order to meet the expectations and demands of the game at the Select level in their teenage years.

Families interested in gaining a better understanding of the principles which guide Iowa Rush staff members are encouraged to check-out the following page on the club website, <http://www.iowarush.com/index.php/levels-of-play/select>, and then clicking on the "Player Development" link in the General Information section.

TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES

The following is a general overview of the different offerings and programs the club provides Select players:

Team Training Sessions- During the fall and spring seasons, players have three (U11-U15) or four (U16 and above) weekly sessions with their team and head coach. Periodically, teams may be combined to allow for certain training themes to be more appropriately addressed, and staff members other than the team's head coach may lead sessions.

Technical Training Sessions- 30-minute skill sessions for U11-U15 players run by members of the club staff which take place before or after Team Training Sessions. These sessions are focused on reinforcing individual technical themes which are a part of Team Training Sessions.

Select Programming (U11-U15) - Comprised of two optional sessions, "Speed & Agility" and "Street Soccer", which take place on Wednesdays during the fall and spring seasons. Speed & Agility sessions focus on the physical components of the game and are modeled after sessions commonly taking place at sports performance clinics. Street Soccer involves games/scrimmages being organized by the players under the supervision of the club coaching staff.

GK Training- Sessions offered 3-4 times per week during the fall and spring seasons which focus on the technical aspects of the position. Players who are consistently in goal during games are strongly encouraged to make these sessions a part of their weekly routine. During the winter season the club offers one weekly session under the direction of Goalkeeping Staff members.



SELECT PROGRAM AND PLAYER DEVELOPMENT OVERVIEW

Winter Training- Sessions organized by age group taking place during the winter season for Iowa Rush Select players which require a separate registration. Players have the option of training once or twice per week. These sessions continue building on themes from the fall season and allow players to stay sharp in preparation for the spring.

Summer Camps- A series of offerings, which are organized by various themes, taking place during the summer months. Specific information can be found on the club website in the “Camps-Leagues” section of the main menu.

Player Training Program- Individual and small-group training sessions, which are offered by members of the club coaching staff during the winter and summer months when Team Training sessions are not taking place. Specific program information can be found in the Summer and Winter sections of the “Camps-Leagues” area of the club website.

COACHING METHODOLOGY

Feedback and direction given to players by members of the coaching staff comes about in a variety forms. It is important for players, and parents, to appreciate all the different ways coaches are imparting their knowledge, in order to maximize the ability to assess their game and figure out ways to improve.

Some of the ways that coaching points are made:

- Correcting the individual during an exercise.
- Stopping play during training and addressing the group to discuss a solution to a problem or highlight a successful moment.
- Demonstrating a particular technique to the group before initiating an activity.
- Cueing players during scrimmages or actual games to get them thinking about particular coaching points during the run of play.
- Half-time discussion with the team about an area to focus on during the second half.
- Chatting with the player on the sideline once they have been substituted off the field.

From these examples the takeaway should be that players recognize information for their benefit is being presented not only when being spoken to directly, but in many situations on the field when the group or another player is being addressed.

LEARNING THROUGH THE GAME

In coaching circles, the statement is often made that the game is the best teacher. Therefore, especially in youth soccer, games should be viewed to a large degree as an extension of the training sessions taking place earlier in the week. Games are a useful teaching tool because they consistently provide situations that coaches can use to provide a “snapshot” to a player in order to reinforce training themes. To maximize the benefit of this approach, the following items are especially important:

- Coaches will look to “guide” players during the game, not “manipulate” them. The role of the coach should not be seen as a puppet master pulling all of the strings.
- Related to the previous point, coaching at this level is not about steering and maneuvering players in an effort to negate them from making any mistakes. At times the best coaching situation (The one that gives the player the best



SELECT PROGRAM AND PLAYER DEVELOPMENT OVERVIEW

picture) is the one right after an unsuccessful moment. This allows players to gain a better understanding as to why a course of action was unsuccessful, and how an alternative action could be applied in the future for a better result.

- To more effectively bring out thoughtfulness and quality decision-making, much of the dialogue from coach to player during the game will be in a conversational tone. Furthermore, a lack of success in a particular moment will not result in wild gestures and posturing from the coach. Playing without a fear of failure is a key component in development.

PLAYER EVALUATION PROCESS

To reinforce the points being made to players on the field, the club provides its players with written evaluations and conferences. The Player Evaluation Process currently involves the following:

U11-U15 players: Head Team Coaches completing a written assessment and offering two conferences for each player on their team during the soccer year.

U16-U19 players: Head Team Coaches completing a written assessment and offering one conference for each player on their team during the soccer year.

The written evaluation and initial conference takes place during the months of December and January, while the second conference for U11-U15 players happens at the end of May-early June.

The purpose of the written evaluation is to help players reflect on their game, in order to identify strengths and areas where growth is needed, to bring about more success in the future. The evaluation provides feedback in the four pillars of the game outlined previously, and should be used by players as a resource to develop a plan for personal improvement.

In addition, the conference allows coaches to clarify and provide further detail about the points addressed in the evaluation, which can make a big difference in how the player processes the information. Furthermore, the conference will allow parents to be in a better position to help facilitate their child's growth in the game by gaining an improved perspective of the player development spectrum.

CLUB PARTNERSHIPS

The club is continually working to develop relationships with organizations and businesses that can provide added value to a player's experience. A couple of the partnerships to note:

Physiotherapy Associates

Iowa Rush and Physiotherapy Associates have partnered-up to provide players the opportunity to participate in the Fusionetics program. Fusionetics is a human performance program to determine an athlete's movement efficiency score. The program then provides options for care to decrease risk of injury and increase performance longevity and durability.

Fusionetics users include a long list of professional sports organizations and collegiate athletic programs, including collegiate soccer programs in Iowa. The program allows participants to have their own profile, which they can easily access at home and on the go, and can provide their daily exercises and progress reports. For more information, please visit the Fusionetics website at <https://fusionetics.com/>.

Hy-Vee

Iowa Rush has partnered with the Ankeny Prairie Trail Hy-Vee to offer Sports Nutrition Clinics which provide in-season and off-season nutrition basics to improve performance. Families registering for these clinics receive two fall sessions, a winter store tour, and two spring sessions under the direction of the store's dietitians. In addition, the program provides a monthly newsletter and access to the Hy-Vee staff as a resource during the year.