

9-10

AYSO 10U Coach - Foundations To Building a U10 Session

Written by American Youth Soccer Organization

BUILDING YOUR 10U SESSION

From The Field

“We (the U.S.) are producing players who are over-coached and predictable as opposed to players who can caress the ball and make you sit up and take notice. Coaches need to be secure with themselves and not allow winning games to validate their importance in the lives of their players.” Sonny Askew, former professional player and current youth coach, Baltimore, MD

FREE PLAY

In our current climate of over-organizing and over-coaching, Free Play is a useful method for players to develop in a natural and safe environment (like playing in the park with your buddies).

Free Play can be used as a pre-warm up upon arrival to prepare players for the technical warm-up that will lead to the session’s tactical work. For younger players, Free Play can be used to evaluate their technical level so you have a logical starting point when the actual session begins.

Free Play can also be used in an activity or scrimmage to simply encourage the player’s creativity, freedom, and expression, not to mention learning through mistakes. In general, Free Play has simple limitations:

- A situation where individuals play without restrictions on time or space, or coaching.
- Players are given general directions on what they should attempt to accomplish and then left on their own.
- Free play allows players to develop natural abilities in a relaxed, coach-free environment

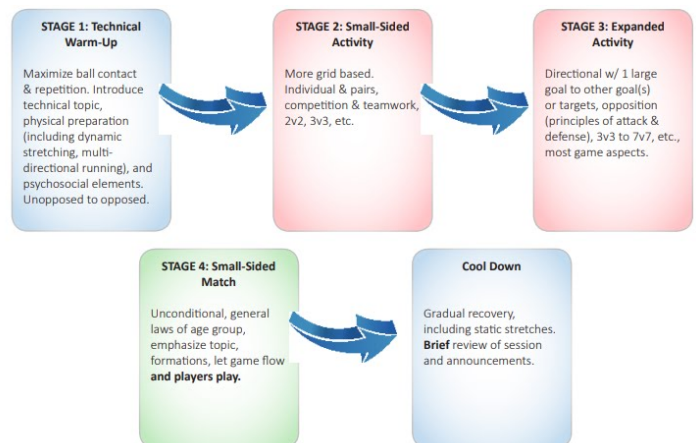
KEEP IN MIND

Ultimately the use of Free Play in our sessions will remind the players of the fun and intrinsic benefit of practicing freely on their own (i.e., juggling or passing against a wall) or pick-up games with buddies at the park...simply playing!

Generally speaking, training sessions should progress as follows:

LAPS, LINES, AND LECTURES

- **Laps:**
You don’t run laps of the field during a soccer match and you can easily obtain the same cardiovascular benefit by running with the ball in a dynamic activity
- **Lines:**
Do your best to eliminate activities that involve players standing in long lines and waiting on their turn to play. We need to maximize time players have with the ball to avoid boredom and keep them engaged (two or three active groups are always better than one long inactive group). Remember circles are also lines.
- **Lectures:**
Children come to soccer to participate and be active not to sit and be lectured for long periods of time (either positively or negatively). Keep your communication positive, brief and to the point.



Eliminating Laps, Lines, and Lectures from your sessions will provide a healthier learning and developmental environment for your players.

WATER BREAKS

Proper hydration is vital to all children but especially vital to young athletes; therefore, we need to make sure our training sessions provide adequate opportunity for rehydration. Some general guidelines:

- Players should hydrate themselves throughout the day not just prior to or at training (to allow for proper absorption into their system).
- Two to three hours prior to participation, players should drink approx. 16 fl. oz. (2 cups) to 20 fl. oz. (2.5 cups).
- Ten to 20 minutes prior to activity the players should drink approx. 7 fl. oz. (0.875 cups) to 10 fl. oz. (1.25 cups) of fluids.
- Break approximately every 10-15 minutes (or as often as needed pending weather and age of players).
- Fluids can be water or sports drinks.
- Rehydration should occur after the activity and ideally be completed within 2 hours. Rehydration should contain water to restore hydration status, carbohydrates to replenish glycogen stores and electrolytes to speed hydration.