

Understanding **Player Development**

Players learn and develop to their full potential through game-like experiences in an enjoyable environment that supports individual growth.

Children of different ages will process and reason information in different ways. There will be various degrees of development from one child to another, but progress here is about direction and not speed.

- Cognitive Development: intelligence, conscious thought, and problem-solving ability
- Motor Development: bones, muscles, and the ability to move around and manipulate their environment
- Psychosocial Development: personality, including the acquisition of social attitudes and skills

A holistic approach will consider these different aspects of development.

General Key Qualities of a Player:

1. Read and understand the game and make decisions
2. Take initiative, be pro-active
3. Demonstrate focus
4. Execute with optimal technical abilities
5. Execute with optimal physical abilities
6. Take responsibility and accountability for their own development and performance

The following Key Qualities and Player Actions are listed in a progressive order. Younger players should not be expected to meet all of these, but they provide a path for development. Older players are best evaluated when considering the following lists:

Specific Key Qualities:

- Remains calm and composed
- Is technically proficient to be effective
- Is coordinated in their movement
- Is adaptable and flexible in dealing with (unexpected) challenges and problems
- Articulates their own learning needs
- Is proficient in 1v1 situations to create or to steal/regain the ball
- Deals with adversity
- Challenges opponents
- Aligns own actions with the other players, positions
- Evaluates and reflects on their own performance
- Delivers on agreements and promises
- Demonstrates bravery
- Confronts situations
- Understands where and when to move themselves to the ball

- Applies (basic) knowledge of the player actions
- Is involved and engaged throughout every game/training session
- Shows comfort with the ball
- Wants to score
- Takes initiative-creates opportunities instead of reacting
- Reads and analyzes situations regarding the structure of soccer attacking/defending/transition

Attacking Player Actions:

- Shoot
- Pass or dribble forward
- Spread Out
- Create passing options
- Support the attack
- Create a 2v1 or 1v1
- Change the point of attack
- Change the pace/rhythm
- Switch positions

Defending Player Actions:

- Protect the goal
- Steal the ball
- Make it compact
- Keep it compact
- Pressure, cover, balance
- Outnumber the opponent
- Stay involved
- Mark the player/mark the area