

The 12U Player Characteristics

Mental/Psychological (cognitive)

Fertile period for learning...eager to learn
Ability to sequence thought and actions and perform more complex tasks...can simultaneously run, strike a ball and think!
Ability to use more abstract thought to meet the demands of the game (i.e. well-timed overlapping run)
Use their teammates to solve game problems
Training must replicate the game

Physical (psychomotor)

Continue to gain a tremendous amount of physical strength, endurance and power
Flexibility training is key to prevention of injury
More confident with physical technical demands above their waist (receiving with the chest; heading the ball)
Goalkeeping skills are becoming refined
Children continue to be in growth spurts
Overuse injuries occur when age appropriate development is ignored
Height can be well over 5 feet and weight can be 100+ pounds
The age range for the beginning of pubescence in girls is 7-14, with the average being 10 years of age
The age range for the beginning of pubescence in boys is 9-16, with the average being 12 years of age
The onset of puberty brings a growth spurt that affects their balance and coordination; they gain strength and power, but temporarily lose agility and suppleness

Socially (psychosocial)

Gender differences are more apparent
Whether a child enters puberty early or late has important psychological implications regarding relationships with their teammates
Spend more time with their friends and less time with their parents
Children tend to conform to peer pressure
Developing a conscience, morality and a scale of values