

The 14U Age Group (Grades 7-8)

This is a transitional age into the adult game. Adult standards and formal rules become applicable at this stage of development. The pace of development quickens at this time due to the acceleration of physical and mental maturation. The demands of skill training as well as training loads should increase thus provoking improvement in mental toughness, concentration and diligence. Awareness of tactics within the game becomes an important facet of the learning process. Players tend to be self-critical and rebellious, but have a strong commitment to the team. The *Principles* of play must be infused in every aspect of training:

Attacking Principles:

Penetration

Support

Mobility

Width

Depth (Length)

Improvisation (deception, creativity)

Defensive Principles:

Recovery (Immediate Chase)

Pressure

Cover

Balance

Compactness

Counter Attack

Role of the Coach

The role of the coach at the 14U age group must be a patient, strong and motivating leader. The coach must create game-like training environments where the lessons of the activities transfer to the game of soccer. Therefore, the coach must be comfortable teaching/coaching in the game. The tactical application of technique becomes extremely important for players in this age group, therefore the coach must introduce functional (position specific) training so that players develop the skills they need to solve the problems that the game presents.

License Recommendations

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