

THE IMPORTANCE OF PLAYER DEVELOPMENT

Parental Education Resources for Player Development at
South Tangi Youth Soccer Association (STYSA) Soccer Club,
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Player Development Process

- Player Development is a long process
- Some coaches and parents approach training and games with an overemphasis on immediate results
- “Peaking by Friday” as a short-term approach
- Player Development varies according to type of sport and can be classified as “Early Specialization” and “Late Specialization”
- Early Specialization Sports: Gymnastics, figure skating, table tennis, etc.
- Late Specialization Sports: Soccer, baseball, basketball, cycling, track and field, etc.



Long-Term Player Development Stages

In soccer, the Long-Term Player Development model requires six (6) stages:

1. FUNdamental Stage (Males 6-9 / Females 6-8 years)
2. Learning to Train (Males 9-12 / Females 8-11 years)
3. Training to Train (Males 12-16 / Females 11-15 years)
4. Training to Compete (Males 16-18 / Females 15-17 years)
5. Training to Win (Males 18 years and older / Females 17 years and older)
6. Retirement (Retain athletes for coaching, administration, officials, etc.)



Stage 1 – The FUNdamental Stage

- The objective is to learn all fundamental movement skills
- This stage should be well-structured and fun !!
- Children should be introduced to the simple rules and ethics of sports
- ABC's of athletics – Agility, Balance, Coordination and Speed (emphasis on overall development)



Stage 2 – The Learning to Train Stage

- The objective is to learn all fundamental sport skills
- Basic flexibility exercises can be introduced in this phase
- Endurance should be developed further by games and relays
- Competition should be well-structured



Stage 3 – The Training to Train Stage

- The objective is to build the aerobic base
- Speed, skill and strength should be maintained or developed further
- Training and competition ratios are optimized
- A 60 percent training to 40 percent competition ratio is recommended by experts
- Athletes who miss this phase of training will not reach their full potential



Stage 4 – The Training to Compete Stage

- The objective is to optimize fitness preparation, individual and position-specific skills and performance
- This phase is introduced after the goals and objectives of the “Training to Train” phase have been achieved. The training to competition and competition-specific training now changes to 50:50
- Much of the focus of training is now on group and team tactics



Stage 5 – The Training to Win Stage

- The objective is to maximize fitness preparation, individual and position-specific skills and performance
- This is the final phase of athletic preparation where athletes are trained to peak for major competitions
- The focus of training has shifted to the maximization of performance
- The training to competition ratio in this phase is 25:75

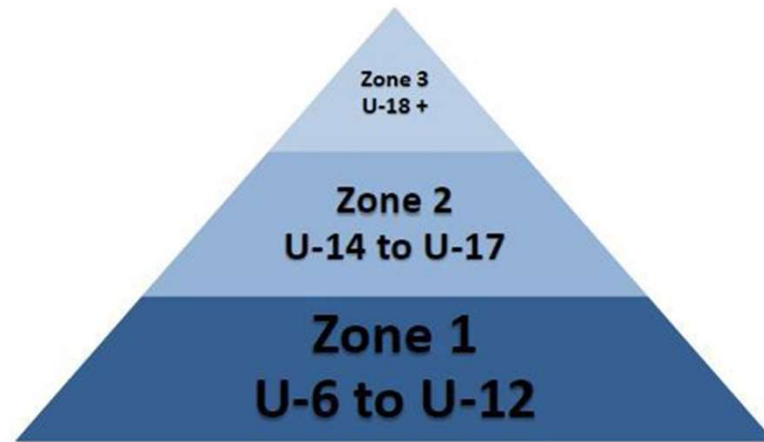


Stage 6 – The Retirement/Retention Stage

- The objective is to retain athletes for coaching, administration, to work as officials, etc.
- This phase occurs after the athlete has retired from competition permanently



US Soccer Player Development Pyramid



U.S. Soccer uses this Player Development Pyramid, giving broad direction to soccer environments while impacting the development of youth players



US Soccer Player Development Pyramid

- **Zone 1** - technical emphasis that is accomplished by focusing on player development versus match outcome. The intent is for coaches, administrators and parents of the players to spotlight the process of playing the game, rather than the score. The measurement of success in Zone 1 is the players' improvement of ball skills, understanding the rules of the game, playing fairly, and learning general game principles.
- **Zone 2**- emphasis is on the club culture and daily training atmosphere. There must be more training sessions and fewer matches, so the players can learn the details of tactics, team formations and game strategies. The focus in Zone 2 needs to be on training sessions.
- **Zone 3** - takes the player toward professional player development. This development will occur in college, semi-pro, professional and youth national teams. This is the age to focus on the outcome of the match as well as the quality of performance.



AVAILABLE PROGRAMS

RECREATIONAL
ACADEMY
COMPETITIVE



Recreational Program

STYSA's Recreational Program is primarily devoted to the enjoyment and development of soccer players without the emphasis on travel or high-level competition. The purpose of recreational soccer is to provide an opportunity for the participants to have fun, learn the sport and develop life skills including a lifelong love of the game.

Age Groups

- U4-U12 (playing modified field)
- U13-U14 (playing full-size field)
- U15-U19 (playing modified field)(coed)



Academy Program

STYSA's Academy is an advanced recreational program developed for players who are ready to expand their soccer abilities. The main objective of the STYSA Academy Program is to strengthen player development. The program focuses mainly on honing individual skills and introducing team-oriented concepts in a friendly environment, so that players feel free to experiment and enjoy the game.

Age Groups

- U5-U6 Pre-Academy (additional training for recreational players)
- U7-U8 Academy (first academy stage – playing modified field)
- U9-U10 Academy (second academy stage – playing modified field)



Competitive Program (ELITE)

STYSA's ELITE Program focuses on the technical, tactical, physical and psychological development of individual players on a pathway towards maximizing their full potential. Teams compete in regional leagues (LCSL and PSL). Players are selected onto teams based on ability, attitude, commitment to the game and what STYSA think is best for the player's development.

Age Groups

- U11-U12 (playing modified field)
- U13-U19 (playing full-field)



Characteristics of U4 Players

- An introduction to soccer, the beautiful game, in a “nurturing” environment. Sessions are designed to promote personal growth and development
- At this age, focus is on teaching the language of the game, movement with the ball, and basic skill and spatial development
- At this age, children not only love to have fun while they play, but it also is one important way that they learn about the world
- Rather than thinking about play versus learning, we can think about ways to incorporate learning into play!
- Similar characteristic as early stage of U5-U6 group



Characteristics of U5-U6 Players

- Ego-centric - focused on themselves
- Everything is in the “here” and “now” – forget about the past and future, they live in the moment
- Enjoy playing, not watching – they feel no enjoyment from watching others play when they could be playing too
- Limited attention span (on average 15 seconds for listening, 10-15 minutes when engaged in a task)
- Typically have 2 speeds – extremely fast and stopped
- Usually unaware of game scores – we should keep it that way



Characteristics of U7-U8 Players

- Tend to play well in pairs
- Prefer playing to watching
- Extremely aware of adult reactions
- Becoming aware of peer perception
- Wide range of abilities between children at this age – children all develop at varying paces
- Some will keep score – No need to stress winning and losing at this age – it's not important. When the emphasis focuses on results, player development is sacrificed
- Beginning to develop motor memories – Repeating fundamental technical skills trains their bodies to remember certain movements



Characteristics of U9-U10 Players

- Attention span lengthens from U8 - they start to show the ability to sequence thought and actions
- Improved energy systems
- Girls begin to grow faster than boys
- Beginning to recognize fundamental tactical concepts
- Children at this age begin to become aware of peer pressure
- Players greatly affiliate with their team or their coach - “I play for the Tigers” or “Coach Eddie’s team”



Characteristics of U11-U12 Players

- All children are maturing at different rates
- Physical differences in boys and girls
- Motor skills are developing
- Players need to warm-up and stretch - muscle pulls and other nagging injuries are common otherwise
- They like to solve problems
- Peer evaluation is a constant and egos are very sensitive
- Coordination may depend on whether or not they are in a growth spurt
- Technique still needs to be reinforced constantly and is a primary focus
- Keep asking the players to be creative and to take risks - we never want them to stop doing these things
- This is the dawn of tactics!



Characteristics of U13-U16 Players

- Players now more focused on their friends and begin to view themselves as being somewhat separate from their parents
- Players become more outgoing and confident; love competition
- Players must develop discipline at this stage by following the instructions of the coach both during and outside training sessions
- Players are growing quicker
- Muscle mass and strength improves
- Energy, speed, and agility are improved
- Players take more responsibility and ownership for the process and their own development



Characteristics of U17-U19 Players

- Strength gains in males
- Females may continue to accumulate fat mass in addition to muscle
- Aerobic capacity increases
- Focus of training is on group and team tactics
- Players are ready for intense fitness training with emphasis on speed, range of motion, strength and stamina



Keys to Successful Player Development

- Recognize that it is a long-term development process
- First, develop the person, and then the player
- Individual development before team development
- Understand the similarities and differences in physical and psychological characteristics of children at various age groups (childhood, puberty, and adolescence)
- Long-term development is a journey that requires patience, detailed understanding, and a structured plan



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