

KEARNEY SOCCER CLUB FOUNDATIONS

U7 & U8 TRAINING GUIDELINES

The U7's and U8's focus is still on footwork and developing a comfort level with the ball at their feet. Their world is beginning to broaden and they understand that the team is no longer just themselves and their one buddy. It's expanding to knowing their coach, their team name and club they are associated with. Clearly levels of ability area beginning to be noticeably different among the players. There are early and late developers and the ones that are earlier in their development are showings signs of physical advancement. We cannot forget about the importance of technique at this age. Coaches should not try to teach young players about tactics at this age. This will lead to frustration both for the players and the coach. The focus for U8 players should be learning technique, especially dribbling. Just let them play!!!

Major Points of Emphasis

1. Continue to have fun and develop a passion for the game.
2. As many touches on the ball as possible, however including more of game like situations, such as 1v1, 2v1 and 2v2
3. Games still need to be a huge part of development and the continued use of tag games that require chasing, immediate pressure and immediate escape are crucial!
4. Try to avoid lines, laps and/or lecture
5. Try to avoid large group activities

Goals for the Player

1. Acquiring fine motor skills and further developing gross motor skills
2. Developing a strong sense of worth, self-esteem and confidence

Player Characteristics

Coaching six, seven, and eight year olds will require special considerations for their overall readiness. U8 players have not developed enough physically, mentally, psychologically or socially to meet the challenges that older players can. Coaches need to remember that they will be dealing with all different kinds of learning styles and maturities of their players. Some characteristics include:

1. Essentially self-oriented
2. Relate to a friend or two and not to large groups.
3. Are concrete and immediate thinkers who pay attention to one task at a time.
4. Cannot judge distance or speed and are still developing concept of time and spatial relationships.
5. Have short attention spans. Coaches need to organize "fun" and "engaging" activities (limit idle time, standing in lines at practice). Participation becomes more important so activity is still vital in practices as well as substations in games. Incline more towards group activity.
6. Submit to the "swarm effect".
7. May start to develop a basic game sense and make "tactical decisions" that include passing the ball with a purpose.
8. Are starting to build coordination.

GOALS AND EXPECTATIONS

1. EVERY session should be fun!!!
2. Players are encouraged to get as many touches on the ball as possible.
3. Making every player technically confident on the ball with both feet.
4. Keep comments for practices and games positive!

U9 & U10 TRAINING GUIDELINES

Major Points of Emphasis

1. Individual technical skills (Ball mastery)
2. Individual attacking and defending skills

Areas to Avoid

1. Team results. Typically game results and standings are not kept.
2. Positional play – pigeonholing. Introducing positions is fine, but players need to be allowed to experience all opportunities. No one should be a “defender” or a “goalkeeper” at this age.

Technical Emphasis

1. Foot skills introduced – demonstrate the different surfaces of the foot and what can be accomplished using those surfaces.
2. Focus on passing, receiving, dribbling and shooting with consistent instruction on technical aspects
Demonstrate the skill – Break the skill down – Demonstrate the skill
3. Introduce heading – differentiate between offensive and defensive heading
4. Individual attacking – emphasize change of direction and change of speed
5. Individual defending (footwork, tackling)
6. Introduce touch restrictions (3 touch play, 2 touch play)

Tactical Emphasis

1. 1 v 1 Attacking - Taking players on and shielding the ball
2. 1 v 1 Defending – “Pressure”
3. Combination play – (1-2’s / take-over)
4. Movement off the ball – (Support)

GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS

1. Peer pressure becomes a factor in relationships
2. Players begin to embrace competition and want to play
3. Identity with a team becomes important

U11 - U13 TRAINING GUIDELINES

Major Points of Emphasis

1. Enjoyment in playing
2. Positive playing mentality
3. Varied activities emphasizing individual technique and playing in small numbers
4. Emphasize training games of 3v3/4v4/5v5
5. Connection in 2’s - 1st and 2nd Defender and Attacker

Technical Emphasis

1. Dribbling- All objectives, possession and penetration
 - a. Shielding
 - b. Escape Maneuvers
 - c. Individual Moves
 - d. 1 v 1 duel - attack and defense

2. Passing/Striking Balls- form (clean instep strike)
 - a. Playing to feet
 - b. Playing to space
 - c. Technique
3. Receiving
 - a. Form & Technique
4. Finishing
 - a. Shooting- power, accuracy
 - b. Slotting ball past keeper
5. Crossing
6. Heading
 - a. Heading to goal
 - b. Defensive heading

Tactical Emphasis

1. Basic Combination Play
 - a. Wall Pass
2. Work of 1st and 2nd attacker and defender
 - a. Role of 1st attacker in achieving penetration or keeping possession
 - b. Role of 2nd attacker in support of 1st attacker.
 - c. Role of 1st defender in denying penetration.
 - d. Role of 2nd defender in support of 1st defender
3. Basic Team Shape (Formation)
 - a. Roles and positions within shape
 - b. Offensive objectives
 - c. Defensive responsibilities
4. Transition (Team and individual)
 - a. Offense to defense
 - b. Defense to offense