

Academy Style Training

Best Practices for U8s & U10s



Compiled by
Terry Eguaoje, Ed.D.
Technical Director of Coaching and Player Development
MISSISSIPPI SOCCER ASSOCIATION

December, 2011



Mississippi Soccer Association

“True player development focuses on the development of the player, not the development of the team! Up to U12, this should be the only criteria used in designing and running youth soccer programs”

- Dr. Ron Quinn, Leading contributor to US Youth Soccer Programming



Why Train Academy Style?

- **More fun for players**
- **Long term player retention**
- **Easy to recruit Coaches**
- **Less stressful for Coaches**
- **Its easy to administer**
- **Great way to educate parents**



How to Administer Academy Training

- **Players are grouped by age**
- **Each age group is assigned practice days and times – this could be once or twice a week**
- **As players arrive they are assigned a field or station**
- **Players move from station to station after a set period of time – example: 10 minutes for U8 players**



How to Administer Academy Training...cont.

- Each station could have different theme or topic
- There are no set “teams”, as players are encouraged to play all positions and with different teammates
- In-house competitions/games only
- “Street Soccer” should be incorporated into game days



How to Administer Academy Training...cont.

- Ideally coaches should have National Youth License or at least the Youth Module License
- Age Group Director should be picked by the Club DOC



Player Development

4V4 versus 8V8

- **Passes:** **+135% or 585 more passes in 4v4 games**
- **Shots Taken:** **+260% or 481 more shots in 4v4 games**
- **Goals Scored:** **+500 or 301 more goals in 4v4 games**
- **1v1's:** **+225% or 525 more 1v1's in 4v4 games**
- **Creativity:** **+280% or 436 more tricks, turns, & moves**



- Dr. Rick Fernoglio (2002-03). Exercise Science Professor at Manchester Metropolitan Univ. & Manchester United Football Club.

Benefits of Academy Style Training

- Coaches are not focused on “Winning” as there are no set teams to be attached to
- More playing time for players
- Parents cheer for everyone
- Players are empowered and allowed to make decisions
- Enhanced level of coaching for players
- Easier and cheaper than forming set teams



Curriculum for U8s and U10s

- U8s
 - Using both feet and all surfaces
 - Ball lifting & juggling; turning, receiving ground balls
 - Shooting, passing, & dribbling – ball control
 - Running with the ball; agility; eye-foot & eye-hand coordination
- U10s
 - Running with the ball; passing; receiving, & dribbling (fakes)
 - Introduce heading & crossing.



Curriculum for U8s and U10s...cont.

- U8s
- 1v1 – small number defending/attacking
- Movement education



- For goalies:
 - Ready stance
 - Holding ball after a save
 - punting & introduction to goal kicks & throwing



Curriculum for U8s and U10s...cont.

- U8s
 - Play in small numbers – partner Activities
 - Ball/Body Awareness Activities
 - **Cooperative/Competitive Activities**
 - Individual ball manipulation Activities
- U10s
 - Individual technical activities
 - Possession games
 - **Cooperative/Competitive Activities**
 - 4v4 games



Sample Lesson Plan for U10 Players

- 1 ¼ hour session (activities could be in stations)
- Warm-up, movement education, & individual ball skills training for all [20 Minutes]
- Water/Rest Break & re-organize groups [5 minutes]
- Small-sided, match-related activities, i.e. 1v1, 2v2 [20 Minutes]
- Water/Rest Break & re-organize groups [5 Minutes]
- Small-sided games, i.e. 3v3, 4v4 [20 Minutes]
- Cool-down and Recap [5 Minutes]



Duties of Academy Director

- Supervise the implementation of the program's technical and tactical syllabus
- Be in constant communication with the selected coaches to assess individual player/group progress
- Report to Director of Coaching on the performance of coaches and players
- Ensure readiness of facilities
- Keep records of reports, lesson plans, etc.



References

- Arkansas State Soccer Association
- Florida Youth Soccer Association
- Illinois Youth Soccer Association
- Manchester United FC
- Mississippi Soccer Association
- North Carolina Youth Soccer Association
- Oklahoma Soccer Association
- US Youth Soccer
- Washington Youth Soccer Association

