



US Women's National Teams Program

U12 – U19 Club, State and Region Curriculum Guidelines

The success of the Women's National Teams Program is largely dependent on the quality of the programs that “feed” into it. True player development occurs when each player's daily training and playing environment is of the highest quality. If this environment is consistent, with a clear vision of what lies ahead for each player, development is then maximized.

Towards that end, the National Staff has put together a list of curriculum guidelines for the U12 through U19 age groups at the club, state, and regional team levels. The purpose of this document is to:

- Educate coaches as to the “standard of play” and “expectations” for each age.
- Provide coaches with a framework with which to organize curriculum decisions.
- Provide for consistency, and guidance throughout all levels of play.
- Improve “vertical integration” for player development.
- Improve the quality of play on a national basis.

It is important to note that each player and each team is different. The following document thus serves as a “*guideline*” or “*standard*” by which players and coaches can plan development. Individual and team needs can therefore be identified and addressed. Individual strengths can be stabilized while deficiencies can be improved. Of course, an accurate assessment of each player's and team's needs are essential. It is imperative that each coach take the time to observe and study the level for which their team is preparing to compete. For example, each club coach should be attuned to the state level, state coaches should make an effort to observe the regional team play, regional coaches should be familiar with the age-group specific national team level, and every coach should spend time studying the Full National Team. In this way, a more accurate assessment of player expectations is possible.

The ultimate goal of each coach should be to prepare the players to compete at the “next level.” We hope this document will assist you towards your goals of developing more sophisticated players and teams.

April Heinrichs	Technical Director & Head Coach–US Women’s National Teams Program
Jerry Smith	U21 National Team Coach
Tracey Leone	U19 National Team Coach
Steve Swanson	U16 National Team Coach
Jeff Pill	National Staff Coach – Region I
Janet Rayfield	National Staff Coach – Region II
Dave Simeone	National Staff Coach – Region III
Jay Entlich	National Staff Coach – Region IV
Karen Richter	National Staff – Youth Goalkeeping Coordinator
Eric Yamamoto	National Staff - Goalkeeper Coach
David Linenberger	Former National Staff Coach – Region II (Men)

“There are many people, particularly in sports who think that success and excellence are the same thing and they are not the same thing. Excellence is something that is lasting and dependable and largely within a person’s control. In contrast, success is perishable and is often outside our control.... If you strive for excellence, you will probably be successful eventually.... people who put excellence in first place have the patience to end up with success.... An additional burden for the victim of the success mentality is that he/she is threatened by success of others and resents real excellence. In contrast, the person fascinated by quality is excited when he/she sees it in others.”

Joe Paterno – Penn State University Head Football Coach

Under 14

Formal Phase: (The Commitment)

Development of Individual Skills Individual & Small Group Tactics

Adult standards and formal rules become applicable. 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.

A. Coach:

Strong personality; Soccer knowledgeable; Enthusiastic; Patient but demanding.
Recommended License: 'C' License or higher.

B. Technique:

Build on the base.
Development of individual skills under the pressure of time, space, and an opponent.
Increase technical speed.

Dribbling: Encourage to take players on 1v1 - Feints/moves; Keep possession – shielding/spin turns.

Receiving: Quality first touch - take balls out of the air/turning: All surfaces, on the run.

Shooting: On the run; On the turn; From all angles/ crosses, volleys.

Passing: Short, long, bent, crosses, driven, chipped. All surfaces, ALL on the run.

Heading: To goal (Shoot/glance), to pass, to clear.

Tackling: Proper techniques.

C. Tactics:

Increase Tactical Speed (decision making under pressure)

Individual: 1v1, in attack and defense.

Attacking: Keep possession; Encourage risk taking: taking players on in the proper areas of the field.

Defending: Proper pressure (in front and behind); Channel player; Immediate chase, angles of pressure.

Small Group: 2v1, 2v2, 3v2, 3v3, 4v2, 4v4.

Attacking: Keep possession: Support; Combination play: wall pass, take-over, overlap, double pass. Width, depth, penetration; Crossing with proper runs in the box; Simple set plays.

Defending: Angle and distance of cover. Balance. Delaying and pressing as a group.

Team: Attacking: Keep possession. Play the ball away from pressure. Maintaining balance in the chosen system. Interchange of positions during the run of play. Encourage attackers to take defenders on in the final third. Keeper as an integral part of the attack (play balls back to the keeper). Players play a variety of positions.

Defending: Maintain good "shape". Zonal concepts. Knowing when to "delay" or "step." Clear decision on where the "line of confrontation" will be. Maintaining good "pressure & Cover" through all three thirds of the field.

Recommended System: the best system for player and team development; 3-4-3.

A great deal of coaching/teaching within 4 v 4 and 7 v 7 games

D. Physical:

All fitness work with the ball.

Flexibility - Static Stretching and Dynamic Flexibility

Agility- Coordination with and without the ball.

Speed

Strength – non-weight bearing, core strength and stability

Endurance

Balance

E. Psychological:

The game should remain fun and enjoyable. Players should have a passion for the game.

Imagination/creativity

Increase demands

Establish training targets

Maintain discipline

Encourage players/teams to watch professional and national teams games on tv.

F. The Game: 11 v 11