



# ***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.

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*“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 19

### Elite Phase: (The Full Bloom)

### Development of Functional & Team Play

Fulfillment of a player's potential depends on her own efforts, the support of her teammates and the unselfish guidance of her coach. She must be exposed to a playing and training environment, which extends her mental, physical, tactical and technical capabilities to the limit. She must have a sound understanding of the games' principles and concepts. Players should show emotional stability when confronted with pressure situations. Demanding and challenging training sessions and matches are a must!

**A. Coach:**

Charismatic, well informed, up to date, experienced, knowledgeable, articulate, disciplinarian- No doubts about his/her authority; Managerial know-how.

Recommended License: 'B' License or higher.

**B. Technique:**

Mastered skills leading to artistry: All at speed under match conditions - Demanding excellence. Individual skill covered during warm-up and competitive situations.

**C. Tactics:**

Increase tactical speed (decision making). Increased pressure and competition. Having the ability to change and adapt to game dynamics, up or down a goal, management of the clock and flow of the game.

***Individual:***

Attacking:

A good deal of time spent in functional training environments

Decisions based on thirds of the field

Comfort in playing in the different areas of the field/team (back, middle, front, center, wide).

Confidence to hold possession as an individual and solve problems at the individual level.

Defending:

Clear understanding of how the quality of pressure effects the ability of the team to defend

Decisions based on thirds of the field.

Comfort at playing two different positions

***Small Group:***

Attacking:

Improvisation/deception encouraged

Advanced understanding of combination play and how to combine to break down a defense

Balance of possession and penetration with a purpose to score goals

Recognize opportunities to penetrate by a variety of means.

Attacking in groups of 3 (forwards, midfielders and defenders)

Defending:

Pressure, cover, balance

Control of the game's speed and direction due to defending decisions

Recognition of double team opportunities

Defending in groups of 3 (forwards, midfielders and defenders)

**Team:**

Understanding of lines and linkage. Positional and Team needs.

Attacking:

Comfort with direct and indirect styles of play

Combination play with tactical implications

Sustained possession as a means to break down the opponent's defense

Speed of play: the game is faster and more physical

Creativity, quality of final ball to beat backs

Understanding how and when to counter attack

Serving runners in the box

Organizing the box with runners (penetration, width and support)

Decisions based on thirds of the fields

Set plays (80% success rate: where we get: 1)Goal 2) Shot on Goal, or 3) Corner Kick

Defending:

Comfort with "high pressure" and "delayed high pressure" styles

Understanding of zonal and man-to-man marking play

Goalkeeper as the last defender

Keeping good team compactness

Stopping the counter attack

Decisions based on thirds of the field and different systems of play

Pressing (when and where to pressure, channel and dictate defensively)

Recommended Systems: All. Based on a variety of factors (individual/team abilities, opponent, field conditions, game management etc....). The US Women's National Team, U21, U19 and U16 National Teams predominantly employ 3 forwards using a 3-4-3 and 4-3-3 system.

**\*A great deal of coaching/teaching within 9 v 9 and 11 v 11 games\***

**D. Physical:**

Fitness work with and without the ball.

Flexibility - Static stretching after training / matches.

Dynamic Flexibility – partner stretching

Importance of discipline for warm-up and cool-down

Agility - with and without the ball

Endurance - Aerobic and anaerobic

Strength - Upper and lower body. Core strength and stability

Balance

Nutrition - Proper diet - pre-game, post-game, tournaments, etc..

Prevention and care of injuries.

Importance of rest/recovery – schedule issues relative to the physical demands

**E. Psychological:**

Increased concentration

Leadership / increased player responsibility

Discipline

Accountability

Goal Setting

Respect for the game

Self confidence, self motivation - goal setting.

Vary program - satisfy player's urge for competition.

Will to win. Mental Toughness/Competitive Mentality

Establish pre practice and pre game routine (as individuals and teams)  
Encourage players/teams to watch professional and national team games on tv.

**F. The Game:** 11 v 11