

U12 - Eleven and Twelve Year-Olds

• **Technical Guidelines:**

- Kicking with the inside and the outside of the instep.
- Chipping.
- Effective shielding from the immediate opponent.
- Disguise in dribbling: body feints, change of speed and direction, wrongfooting defenders.
- Learning three or four moves to use to beat a defender.
- Beginning of consistent practice of heading - regular, but not much.
- Side block tackle.
- Shoulder charging.
- Shooting bouncing balls: volleys and half-volleys.
- Now, in receiving balls, players consciously set up their second touch with their first touch.

Tactical Guidelines:

- Switching the direction of play or the point of attack.
- The overlap.
- Awareness of the different "climates" in the three thirds of the field: attack, midfield, defense.
- Continuing to focus on the "three main moments", with particular emphasis on transition.
- Understanding the difference between passing to feet and passing to space.
- Good body position when asking for the ball: facing field or sideways, watching ball and immediate opponent, etc.
- Making good choices about trying to penetrate or protecting the ball, based on whether or not there is pressure when you receive the ball. Consistently intelligent first touches upon receiving.
- Reading the body position of a defender: hips square or hips turned, has she or he committed to winning the ball or not?, etc.
- Understanding the difference between losing the ball and giving it away.
- Correct body position of defenders challenging for the ball: "turned, not square."
- Positioning "ball side" as well as "goal side" in marking.
- Second defender covering the first defender.
- Solid defensive understanding against one opponent and when confronted by two opponents.

Fitness Guidelines:

- Nothing without the ball.
- No strength or endurance training.

The Practice Environment:

- "Play time" and a learning environment.
- Some pressured play in confined areas; games of numbers up and numbers down; one of the best is 5 v 2.
- No specializing by positions.
- Duels at full speed: lots of 1 v 1 and 2 v 1 situations.
- 3 v 3 or 4 v 4 games at every practice.
- # 4 or # 5 ball; small goals.
- Emphasis still on technical development: the acquisition of skills.
- The week's practice is 75 to 90 minutes long.

Games:

- Equal playing time.
- 6 v 6 or 7 v 7. "Eleven after eleven": eleven players on a team after eleven years of age.

- Players play all the "positions".
- Friendship tournaments.
- Focus on enjoyment and the future: no stress on winning and losing.