

Topic: Improving Training Sessions

Objectives: To assist coaches in improving training sessions by identifying best practices to emulate and simple pitfalls to avoid.

Discussion:

With a small amount of pre-planning, coaches can maximize the benefit of the training for their players.

~ Stay away from the 3 L's: lines, laps and lectures. We only have the players for a limited time for soccer training.

Lines: Do your best to stay away from activities that have players stand in lines to wait their turns (although rest time between participation in activities is okay). If you want to work on shooting...split the group up and work on multiple goals or include other movements rather than just standing and waiting.

Laps: Don't just run laps or sprints...any activity with a ball can emphasize aerobics. You can adjust the size of the activity space to increase or decrease the emphasis on aerobic work.

Lectures: Refrain from long lectures. I know that there is a lot to pass on, but take it in small bites and let the game teach them while they play. Let them start the activity before you say anything besides the basic rules needed to play. Coach as they play. Stop only occasionally to emphasize a main point.

~ Challenge yourself to use activities that maximize the number of touches each player gets in a training. Stay away from 1 ball for a lot of players, until you scrimmage. Warm up with multiple ball activities (use 1 ball for every 2 players for pass and move action). Use small sided games (split your group into smaller groups for 1v1, 2v2, 3v2, etc.).

~ Use activities that simulate the game. Stay away from static activities (standing and kicking), and choose activities that involve constant movement while receiving the ball, playing the ball, and defending the ball. Even if your focus is offense v. defense, have goals for the defense and encourage the transition between the offense and defense.

Take Aways:

~ Training sessions should maximize the number of touches every player can get in.

~ Let the game teach the players...starting out small and growing through the session

~ Talk less. Teach within the game while it continues.