



NEW ENGLAND AZTEC

A Complete Soccer Association



This is a primer for the age. The bullet format will allow a coach to review their players' needs frequently throughout the season. Remember that unless you have a U18 team, your players will view things differently than you will. It is your job as a coach to put yourself on their level and present in a way that makes sense to them.

Under-10 (3rd and 4th graders)

About the Age

- They want to have FUN!!!
 - Encourage games to goal and experimentation with the ball
- Players are beginning to become physically more mature
 - Do not encourage these players to use athleticism to solve problems
- Players do not understand cause and effect explanations
 - Let them learn through experience & keep explanations brief
- Competition is natural and second nature. The players will see it and it will happen. Avoid making it your coaching focus. Focus on the process and not the result.
- 9 & 10 year olds do not play the game of soccer adults see, so don't force them to try
 - Do not implement organization schemes
 - Do not introduce positions
 - DO NOT make players "stay in their lane"
- Players should be encouraged to watch older players (high school, professionals) not for tactics but for creativity and ideas – "Did you see Taylor Twellman score the goal last night when he dribbled in with the instep of his foot?"

About a session

- Ideal length: 60-75 minutes; 10-15 minute activities
- Ball size: 4 (no size 5's; it is the parent's responsibility)
- Player to ball ratio 1:1 to 3:1
- Session should be player focused and simple with basic problems for them to solve
- Constant positive feedback is a must!!!
- Give player opportunity to be with a ball and be creative. This is their self-expression on the field.
- Players will start to enjoy playing the game skillfully.

Information and Communication

- All positive!!!
- Negative words should disappear from your vocabulary for the session – None of "You can't do that." "Don't do that," or "That's not good."
- Information should be basic ideas of how to keep the ball under control or moving the ball around with other players around
- No discussions on positioning or team concepts –No chalk talk. No need for a dry erase board
- Provide pictures through demonstration – Players learn most through recreation of a picture
 - Limit the amount of time you spend explaining technique



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- Give them ideas to test and let them experience them.

About a match

- Ideal 4v4 (5v5 at most); no goalkeepers
- There should be a limited number of organized matches; if you are playing an organized match make sure it has the feel of play
- No need to keep score and there isn't a winner or loser
- No throw ins – all kick ins either pass or dribble in
- Keep your involvement to a minimum
 - Basic rules of the game “If the red team kicks it out of bounds, which team kicks it in?” Don't give them the answer and don't let the parents give them the answer.
 - No pushing (arms extended away from body) but allow players to feel pressure of contact
- Stay positive on players getting the ball and trying to score – every player should be excited about having the ball on their feet and to score
 - They will start to develop and see the game as the progress and solve the problems that are created
- NO team concepts or positioning
 - Keeping players back to “play defense” hinders their development – concede you will get scored on for the sake of your players ability in 2 or 3 years
- Do not encourage an activity to be performed in the name of safety
 - Ex. “Kick it long” or “Kick it out” – You're getting in the way if you influence in this way to win.
- Limit the feedback after a match

Comments to Utilize

- “See if you can make it look like this”
- “Try this”
- “How about this”
- “Go get the ball”
- “go score a goal”
- “Join the game”
- “Find the ball”
- “Don't hide”

Closing

Your job is to give your players tools to move from U10 to U12 and beyond. Facilitate a love affair between your players and the ball is the best thing you can do for their development. If you accomplish this love affair you've had a successful season as a coach. Empower your players to try things, be creative, want the ball, get the ball, and above all enjoy the game. The ultimate result of your success will be seen in a few years as they continue to develop with the game. Remember it will very rarely look the way your adult eyes view the game and often be hectic or chaotic. As a coach, remember you're having fun too!