

U.S. SOCCER GRASSROOTS PLAYER DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK



GAME MODEL: 4v4

AGES: 6 - 8

(Framework- a basic structure underlying a system)

U.S. SOCCER GRASSROOTS PLAYER DEVELOPMENT PHILOSOPHY

At the grassroots level, children learn and develop to their full potential through game-like experiences in an enjoyable environment that supports individual growth.

U.S. SOCCER COACHING EDUCATION PHILOSOPHY

Reality Based: The game is what drives changes in behavior, reflection and decision making for the player/the team and the coach

Holistic Approach: Input and consideration for all interconnected aspects of the game, the athlete and the desired outcome

Experiential Learning: The evaluation, analysis and reflection of experiences to develop competencies and improve behavior

KEY QUALITIES OF A U.S. SOCCER PLAYER

1. Read and understand the game and make decisions
2. Take initiative, be pro-active
3. Demonstrate focus
4. Execute with optimal technical abilities
5. Execute with optimal physical abilities
6. Take responsibility and accountability for their own development and performance

The U.S. Soccer Grassroots Player Development Framework is a simplified overview of the development pathway of U6 to U13+ grassroots players related to the four game models and player ages, based on goals, needs, key qualities, and player/coach behavior.

We define player development as a series of progressive changes leading to a higher level of differentiation and functioning. Two characteristics of development are change and progress. Differentiation is the developmental process when the qualities of a player are getting more advanced and refined. The combination of growth, maturation and learning lead to a higher level of functioning. When maturing, it is about physical growth. Learning is the process by which experience results in a change in behavior. Children of different ages will process and reason information in different ways.

The stages of player development see development as a regular succession of stages, in a process of continuous progress. This development is a combination of cognitive, psychosocial and motor development.

- Cognitive development is the development of intelligence, conscious thought, and problem-solving ability.
- Motor development refers to the development of a child's bones, muscles and ability to move around and manipulate his or her environment.
- Psychosocial development is the development of the personality, including the acquisition of social attitudes and skills.

There will be a holistic approach when looking at these different aspects of development. This means, input and consideration for all interconnected aspects of the game, the player and the desired outcome.

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GAME MODEL: 4v4

AGES: 6 - 8

4v4

AGE 6

AGES 7 - 8

DEVELOPMENTAL GOALS	DEVELOPMENTAL NEEDS	KEY QUALITIES	ATTACKING PLAYER ACTIONS	DEFENDING PLAYER ACTIONS	PLAYER BEHAVIORS	COACH BEHAVIORS
"The ball is playing with me... I am playing with the ball." Learning the fundamentals of the game in game-like situations. Understanding the purpose and structure of the game, direction of play, and basic rules.	Activity based games that emphasize exploration and experimentation. Ball experiences in game-like situations. Exploring physical abilities.	- Reads and analyzes situations regarding the structure of soccer attacking/defending/transition - Takes initiative-creates opportunities instead of reacting - Wants to score - Shows comfort with the ball - Is involved and engaged throughout every game/training session	- Shoot - Pass or dribble forward	- Protect the goal - Steal the ball	Small, incidental things are important Always in motion	Appreciate the things they take seriously, even if you don't Use routines to manage them during practice and games
"Playing with my friends." Learning the basic understanding of attacking, defending, and transition by playing together..	Activities focused on the goals of attacking and defending and how to accomplish them Ball experiences in game-like situations with attention for the key qualities of a player Experiences of attacking and defending together (reading & decision making)	- Applies (basic) knowledge of the cues - Understands where and when to move themselves and the ball - Confronts situations - Demonstrates bravery - Delivers on agreements and promises - Evaluates and reflects on their own performance <i>Plus all key qualities above</i>	- Spread out - Create passing options - Support the attack <i>Plus all player actions above</i>	- Make it compact - Keep it compact <i>Plus all player actions above</i>	Short attention span Live in the moment Focus is on self	Exercises are short and to the point, reminders are necessary Talk about what happens, not what happened Accept their behavior and praise when they share

A>D Defend as quickly as possible (transition is always a part of attacking and defending but is not a focus for the Grassroots Coach).

D>A Attack as quickly as possible (transition is always a part of attacking and defending but is not a focus for the Grassroots Coach).