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Ancaster Soccer Club Technical Stages of Development

The breakdown that follows is a guide that can be used to determine the specific skills/techniques that the player should develop at the particular age groups. The list is by no means complete and different players will of course develop at different rates. It is to be used as a reference. The lists represent the minimum abilities a player should possess at those ages to be able to achieve the higher levels. Each level assumes mastery of all the preceding levels.

Some developmental characteristics of that particular age group have also been noted to use as an aid when putting programs - sessions together...a good teacher knows his/her audience.

Level One 1 Technical - Tactical

Ages 4/5/6 year old

Specific Target: Fun and learning about the world's game.

- * Movement
- * Coordination
- * Directional Changes
- * Agility and Balance
- * Visual Perception
- * Familiarity with the ball
- * Moving towards other teams goal
- * Understanding Instruction
- * Eye to Ball Coordination
- * Foot to Ball Coordination
- * Have fun and play with passion

Characteristics of children aged 4-6

Have a very short attention span

- * Keep length of instruction to a minimum
- * Get them moving as quickly as possible
- * Keep the drills short and varied
- * Keep the lineups as short as possible, 3 or less.
- * As much as possible, have races & competitions.
- * Don't make tasks too intricate.
- * Be positive and enthusiastic, encourage them

Level Two Technical - Tactical

Ages 6/7 year old

Specific Target: House league

Player with Ball: Manipulation and Movement with the Ball

Emphasis on action, fun and simplified small games with limited instruction

- * Players moving in all directions with ball under control using inside and outside of both feet.
- * Players turning/cutting with ball using sole, inside and outside of both feet.
- * Players running, stopping, turning with ball under control
- * Juggling basics, click with each foot
- * Target 500 - 1000 touches of ball each session
- * Controlling and passing ball with inside of both feet.
- * Controlling and short passing on the move.
- * Kicking/shooting with instep/laces
- * Have fun and play with passion

Characteristics of children aged 6-7

- Same as 5-6

Level Three Technical - Tactical

Ages 8/9/10 year old

Specific focus: select and rep level players

Mastery and Manipulation of the Ball together with the development of basic technique through individual, group and small game activities.

- * Players moving in all directions with ball under control using inside and outside of both feet.
- * Players turning/cutting with ball using sole, inside and outside of both feet.
- * Players running, stopping, turning with ball under control
- * Ball manipulation using various parts of both feet : foot roll, quick feet
- * Dribbling moves: body feint moving outside, feint drag
- * Juggling basics, click with each foot
- * Controlling and passing ball with inside of both feet.
- * Controlling and short passing on the move.
- * Targeting 1,000 - 1, 250 touches of ball in each session
- * Kicking/shooting with instep/laces
- * Looking to move to space
- * Learning how to play when not in possession
- * Using both feet to trap and dribble
- * Controlling with chest and thigh
- * Have fun and play with passion

Characteristics of children aged 8-10

- Improvement in coordination
- Increase in attention span
- Sensitivity to criticism
- Be positive and encourage kids

Level Four Technical - Tactical

Ages 11/12/13 year old

Specific Target: Select - Rep - and district teams

Technical Skills Development

Continued development of individual techniques and skills leading to game related practices.

- * Control 1st touch under pressure
- * Receiving and turning under pressure
- * Passing : inside, outside and instep of foot, short, long, lofted, swerve, chip
- * Shooting : technique and skill.
- * Heading : attacking and defensive
- * Near and far post crossing and runs
- * Pressure introduced in all drills
- * Circle of control is one step wide
- * Combination plays : wall pass, overlap, x-over
- * Technical subtleties
- * Basic principles of defending
- * Small group tactics : attack/defense
- * Conditioned games
- * Introduction to functional practice : attack/defense
- * Introduction to full 11 v 11 game
- * Team shaping
- * Game review
- * Personal practice
- * Fitness training on their own
- * Have fun and play with passion

Characteristics of children aged 10-12

- More developed physically
- Well balanced and coordinated
- Improved endurance
- Self confidence

** Encourage players to watch soccer (quiz them on the best teams, players etc) and then they may practice the moves their idols use.

Characteristics of children aged 12-13 - Puberty

- Accelerated growth – bones are growing, but muscles have not caught up
- Difficulty with coordination
- Loss of self confidence
- Need for recognition and acknowledgment

Level 5 Technical - Tactical

14/15/16 year old

Specific Focus: Rep - District - Provincial

Technique on Demand

Constant practice with quality and intensity of the most used techniques and skills leading to coaching in full game situations.

** Intensity of practice is increased.

Technique on Demand

- * Short and long passing
- * Passing and support
- * Receiving and Control 1st touch
- * Receiving and turning

Advanced Technique

- * One/two touch play
- * Crossing and finishing
- * Shooting – volleying
- * Control of ball with all body parts at speed
- * Dribbling past opponents
- * All drills done at game speed
- * Attacking/Defensive heading
- * Attacking Functions
- * Defending functions
- * Coaching in the game
- * Dead ball kicks
- * Shadow play
- * Game review and analysis
- * Fitness and fitness testing
- * Weight and circuit training
- * Have fun and play with passion

Characteristics of children aged 14-16

- Body regains physical balance – muscles have caught up with bones
- Improved coordination
- Body gains strength and power
- Psychological stability
- Growing self confidence
- Logical thinking and understanding
- An understanding of the environment
- Critical thinking (soccer is a game played between the ears)

Characteristics of children aged 16-18

- Physically maturing (bones and muscles grow equally)
- Final stage in the development of coordination and psychological abilities
- General maturing (becoming an adult)

Level Six Technical - Tactical

Ages 17/18/19 year old

Specific Focus - Rep - District - Provincial - National

Developing a Winning Mentality

Having completed stage 1 to 5 of the Development model, players will be technically skillful and tactically adept. To perform well and win, will be more about Attitude, Commitment, Effort and Speed. At this stage desire and passion will be the greatest determinants of whether or not the player progresses.

- * Tactical Awareness
- * Tactical Adaptability
- * Mental Toughness
- * Game Toughness
- * Practice Intensity
- * Fitness and strength
- * Fitness Testing
- * Psychological Preparation
- * Nutrition
- * Health Lifestyle
- * Sports Science Update
- * Fun and Play with Passion