

The U10 Soccer Player

Characteristics

Player's attention span lengthens.

Players now affiliate with their team and their coach.

They want to play soccer instead of just playing.

They start to recognize tactical concepts... movement off the ball, formations, first and second defender, etc.

Players start to think ahead... if this happens, then this happens.

Exercises

Ball Retrieve

Players are in groups of 3 or 4 with one ball in a large space. The coach tosses the ball away and the players must return it to the coach with each player touching the ball at least once with their feet only. The coach can then call out a number and the players must return the ball with exactly that many touches. This teaches players the concept of length and width and collective play. The coach could move around the area to make it more difficult.

Defrost Tag

Use a 30-yard by 30-yard area and two equal teams. One team is inside the area without balls. The other team starts outside the area, and all have a ball. On the coach's signal, the team with the balls dribbles into the area and tries to hit the other team's players with a pass (not a shot) below the knees. Players can run and jump to avoid being hit. Once a player is hit, they are frozen and must stand with legs apart and hands on hips. A frozen player may become unfrozen by a teammate crawling fully between their legs. They both are then back in the game. The object is to see how long it takes to freeze the entire team. This activity involves dribbling, passing to a target, and fitness.

Elbow Tag

Players are in pairs with their elbows hooked and standing randomly in an area. The coach breaks apart one pair and gives one player a cone to carry. This player chases the partner and tries to tag them with the cone. The cone may not be thrown. If they tag their partner, the player drops the cone, and the roles reverse. The player who is being chased tries to get safe by hooking onto an empty outside elbow of another player. Once this occurs, the player on the opposite end must leave and is now being chased by the player with the cone. Once they get the hang of it, involve other pairs as chasers and those being chased. This activity encourages quick thinking, anticipation, and lots of sprinting and change of direction.

Get Outta Here

Utilize a small-sided field with a small goal at each end and two equal sized teams. Start with a 2v2 game. The coach tosses a ball onto the field and two players from each team run out to play a game to a designated goal. If a goal is scored, the scoring team stays on the field, the defending team sprints off and a new pair comes on to play. If the ball goes out of play, the coach shouts "GET OUTTA HERE" and both teams come off and are replaced by two new pairs. This fast-paced exercise incorporates all aspects of the game.

Balls Galore

Play a normal small-sided game on a half or full field with goals and goalkeepers. The only exception is that the coach will add balls to the game if players are packing up and following just one ball. This is a great opportunity for all aspects of the game as well as to become aware of the concept of spreading out.

Summary

Players can now be relied upon to bring a ball, water, etc.

Peer pressure is very apparent.

Rules become important and are observed.

Technical training should be emphasized (proper dribbling, passing, receiving, and shooting with both feet).

Still no laps, long lines, or lectures.

