

Dakota Alliance Soccer Club

Training Program for U7's – U8's

TRAINING REGIMEN AND GUIDELINES

Focus is on "I"ndividual Technical Skills

The U7's and U8's focus is still on footwork and developing a comfort level with the ball at their feet. Their world is beginning to broaden and they understand that the team is no longer just themselves and their one buddy. It's expanding to knowing their coach, their team name and club they are associated with. Clearly levels of ability area beginning to be noticeably different among the players. There are early and late developers and the ones that are earlier in their development are showings signs of physical advancement. We cannot forget about the importance of technique at this age. Coaches should not try to teach young players about tactics at this age. This will lead to frustration both for the players and the coach. The focus for U8 players should be learning technique, especially dribbling. Just let them play!!!

HIGH Priority

1. Continue to have fun and develop a passion for the game.
2. As many touches on the ball as possible, however including more of game like situations, such as 1v1, 2v1 and 2v2
3. Games still need to be a huge part of development and the continued use of tag games that require, chasing, immediate pressure and immediate escape are crucial!

LOW Priority

1. No lines, laps and/or lecture
2. No large group activities

Player Expectations

1. Acquiring fine motor skills and further developing gross motor skills
2. Developing a strong sense of worth, self esteem and confidence

Player Characteristics

Coaching six, seven, and eight year olds will require special considerations for their overall readiness. U8 players have not developed enough physically, mentally, psychologically or socially to meet the challenges that older players can. Coaches need to remember that they will be dealing with all different kinds of learning styles and maturities of their players. Some characteristics include:

1. Essentially self-oriented
2. Relate to a friend or two and not to large groups.
3. Are concrete and immediate thinkers who pay attention to one task at a time.
4. Cannot judge distance or speed and are still developing concept of time and spatial relationships.
5. Have short attention spans. Coaches need to organize "fun" and "engaging" activities (limit idle time, standing in lines at practice). Participation becomes more important so activity is still vital in practices as well as substations in games. Incline more towards group activity.
6. Submit to the "swarm effect".
7. May start to develop a basic game sense and make "tactical decisions" that include passing the ball with a purpose.
8. Are starting to build coordination.

GOALS AND EXPECTATIONS

1. ***EVERY session should be fun!!!***
2. ***Players are encouraged to get as many touches on the ball as possible.***
3. ***Making every player technically confident on the ball with both feet.***
4. ***Keep comments for practices and games positive!***