



The New Prague Soccer Club Player Development Guidelines

Youth Players U5-U19



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Player development guidelines have been established and adapted from the Minnesota Youth Soccer Association (MYSA) and the United States Soccer Federation (U.S.S.F.). Coaching Education recommendations have been adapted from MYSA, the U.S.S.F. and the National Soccer Coaches Association of America (NSCAA).

The purposes of these guidelines are to provide coaches with:

- A long-term plan for player development for youth players U5-U19
- A baseline of expectations at each age group for coaches to organize their training around
- A club-wide plan that addresses player development in a stage by stage basis
- A recommendation of age appropriate coaching education to improve player development

It is important to note that each player and team is different. Players develop at different rates and times. Before the below guidelines are applied, the individual player and team must be evaluated to determine a proper starting spot. In addition, Coaches should not assume that all previous training was permanently learned by players therefore coaches may need to review or reteach previous training of previous developmental levels in order to improve each player and team development.

In organizing all training sessions, the below principles should apply to each training session (*U.S.S.F. Coaching Education*):

1. Activities are developmentally appropriate
2. Coaches provide clear, concise, and correct information
3. Instruction is organized to move from simple to complex
4. A safe and appropriate training space is utilized
5. Decision making by players is required with activities
6. Activities have implications towards the game



U5-U7: The Introduction

Ages Group Considerations:

The fascination for the ball, the desire to master it and the thrill of scoring goals provides the launching pad. The joy and pleasure of the game are best nurtured by encouraging freedom of expression and organizing children's play in small groups. The activities are best nurtured by allowing freedom of expression within small group situations. (MYSA)

Coach: Facilitator, Friendly Helper; Organizer; Stimulator; Patient; Enthusiastic; Imaginative

Recommended Coaching Education: MYSA Youth Module 1 U6-U8 (4 hours) and/or
NSCAA Youth Level I U5-U8 (2.5 hours) and/or
NSCAA Youth Level II U5-U10 (5 hours)

Technique/Tactics: Learning through FUN games and age appropriate activities.

Activities should be:

- Fun
- Appropriate for the Age
- Promote Decision Making
- Encourage Creativity
- Participation of All Players with a ball

Games: Body Awareness => Maze Games => Target Games

Skills to Master:

Dribbling: All surfaces/Attacking Moves/Turns/Change of Speed/Change of Directions

Receiving: Ground Balls/Move Feet to Meet the Ball/Control with All Surfaces of Foot/Cushion/ Air Balls-Self-Served

Passing: Proper technique with Inside/Laces/Outside/From the Dribble/Weight of Pass

Physical: Physical Movement Education through Soccer

- Body Awareness
- Balance
- Coordination - Eye Hand and Eye Foot
- Agility - Changing Direction while in Motion

Psychological: Keep it FUN and ENJOYABLE to Foster a Desire to Play.

- Tend to one task at a time - controlling the Ball is a Complex Task (Realistic Expectations)
- Does not understand group or collective play - Individual Activities (All Players with a Ball)
- Short attention span unless peaked - Keep Interest High
- Like to show what they can do - Encourage to Try New Things
- Develop Self Esteem - Activities that Foster Positive Feedback and Attainable Positive Success

* At the earlier ages, winning is not the primary emphasis of our program. At these ages individual skill development is much more important. NPAYSC believes taking the short track to winning at the early ages may win games, but cheats players in their long term development. By stressing individual development, we will produce technically proficient players who can later be taught tactics.



U8-U10: The Fun Stage

Ages Group Considerations:

The motivation to learn basic skills is very high at this age level. Children gradually begin to change from being self-centered to being self-critical and develop the need for group and/or team games. The game itself should be central to all skills training. Eleven-a-side soccer is too sophisticated and complicated for young players - small sided games, which provide the right amount of pressure for the child's level of development, are more appropriate. (MYSA)

Coach: Sensitive Teacher; Patient; Enthusiastic; Imaginative; Ability to Demonstrate; Understanding of Technique; Preferably Young

Recommended Coaching Education: MYSA Youth Module 2 U8-U12 (4 hours) and/or
MYSA State E Certificate (18 hours) and/or
NSCAA Youth Level III U6-U10 (13 hours) and/or
NSCAA Youth Level IV U9-U12 (18 hours)

Skills to Master:

Dribbling: All surfaces/Attacking Moves/Turns/Change of Speed/Change of Directions

Receiving: Body behind the ball/Cushion Ball/Control with All Surfaces of Foot/Air Balls from Self-Service

Passing: Proper technique with Inside/Laces/Outside/From the Dribble/Weight of Pass

Shooting: Body Facing Target/Position of Plant Foot/Ankle Locked/Follow Through/Striking off the Dribble

Heading: Introduce/Build Confidence/Soft Ball/Proper Technique

*Repeat skills in a variety of exercises and games where kids are always active.

Tactics:

Attacking: Control, Possess, Attack

1 vs. 1: attacking first touch/unbalance defender/beat with move/change of speed

2 vs. 1: Spacing/Angles/Commit Defender/Recognize Situation/Advance/ Combine with 1-2 (give and go)

3 vs. 1: Spacing/Angles/Commit Defender/Attack quickly

*Attack quickly, don't let the ball slow down or stop moving

Defending: Pressure/Cover/Balance

1 vs. 1: Immediate Pressure /Goal Side/Keep in Front/Delay/Win Ball

1 vs. 2: Immediate Pressure /Keep in Front/Delay/Support Behind/Depth

*Get immediate pressure but move your feet and stay in front of the attacker

Physical: All Fitness with the Ball

Coordination

Balance

Agility- Changing direction while in motion

Psychological: Keep it FUN and ENJOYABLE to Foster a Desire to Play

Demonstrate Increased Self-Responsibility - Give Responsibility for Preparation; Discipline

Can Initiate Play - Let it Happen - Learn through Self-Discovery/Self-Expression

Enjoy Competition - All Activities Should have Objectives/Method of Scoring

Can work in Groups - Cooperative Games and Activities

Practice Set-up: Between 1 hour and 1 ½ hours:

-Arrival: Juggling- encourage players to break their records and join our juggling clubs (10 minutes)

-Warm-up: Ball Control/Dribbling/Tag Activities (10 minutes)

-Skill Work: Introduce or Review Topics (15 minutes)

-Tactics: 1v1, 2v2 or partner/group passing activities (15 minutes)

-Game: 5v5 or 6v6 (10 to 15 minutes)

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U11-U12: The Foundation Stage

Ages Group Considerations:

This is the “Golden Age of Learning”. Players yearn to improve, achieve, and be recognized as quality soccer players. Demonstrating is very important at this age. Players want to see success so they can intern emulate it. Activities should be game like with the appropriate amount of pressure. This is also an appropriate time to introduce and teach basic principles of play. It is important to establish discipline from the beginning. (MYSA)

Coach: Sensitive Teacher; Enthusiastic; Possess Soccer Awareness; Ability to Demonstrate; Knowledge of the Key Factors of Basic Skills; Give Encouragement; Preferably Young

Recommended Coaching Education: MYSA Youth Module 2 U8-U12 (4 hours) and/or
MYSA State E Certificate (18 hours) and/or
USSF National or State D License (36 hours) and/or
NSCAA Youth Level IV U9-U12 (18 hours) and/or
NSCAA Youth Level V U11-U18 (18 hours) and/or
NSCAA Youth Level VI Diploma (21 hours)

Skills to Master:

Dribbling: Encourage Attacking/Variety of Turns and Moves to Beat a
Defender/Shielding/Change of Speed and Direction

Receiving: Ground and Air Balls/All Surfaces of Foot and Body from partner of the move

Passing: Proper technique with Inside/Laces/Outside/Short to Long/Crossing

Shooting: Body Facing Target/Position of Plant Foot/Ankle Locked/Follow
Through/Striking off the Dribble

Heading: Proper Technique/Partner Serve/Jumping to Head/Redirecting Ball/Partner
Juggling

*Add pressure through time, space, and defenders to push players to execute skills at a high level.

Tactics:

Individual Attackers: Attacking First Touch/Unbalance Defender/Take Risks in the
Appropriate Part of the Field/Do at Speed

Small Group Attacking: 2v1, 2v2, 3v1, 3v2, 3v3/Spacing/Angles/Commit Defender/Possess/
Combine (wall pass/overlaps, takeovers, double pass)

Individual Defender: Immediate Pressure/Goal Side/Keep in Front/Delay/Redirect

Small Group Defending: 2v1, 2v2, 3v1, 3v2, 3v3/Pressure/Cover Behind/
Balance/Depth/1st Defender/2nd Defender/3rd Defender

***A Great Deal of Coaching/Teaching within 4v4 Games**

Physical: All Fitness Work with the Ball

Agility - Coordination on the Ball

Speed

Strength

Endurance

Psychological: Keep it FUN and ENJOYABLE to Foster a Desire to Play

Encourage Decision Making

Imagination/Creativity

Increase Demands

Discipline

Encourage to Watch High Level Soccer



U13-U14: The Formal Stage

Ages Group Considerations:

Adult standards and formal rules become the focal point during this period. The pace of development quickens at this level due to the acceleration of physical and mental maturation. The demands of skill training as well as training loads should increase thus provoking improvement in mental toughness, concentration and diligence. Awareness of tactics within the game becomes an important facet of the learning process. Players tend to be self-critical, rebellious but have a strong commitment to the team. (MYSA)

Coach: Strong Personality; Soccer Knowledgeable; Enthusiastic

Recommended Coaching Education: MYSA State D License (36 hours) and/or
USSF National D License (36 hours) and/or
USSF National C License (70 hours) and/or
NSCAA Youth Level V U11-U18 (18 hours) and/or
NSCAA Youth Level VI Diploma (21 hours) and/or
NSCAA National Diploma (45 hours)

Skills to Master:

Dribbling: Encourage Attacking/Variety of Turns and Moves to Beat a Defender/Shielding/Change of Speed and Direction

Receiving: Vision Before Receiving/Quality First Touch/ Ground and Air Balls/All Surfaces of Foot and Body, on the Run

Passing: Short to Long/Bent/Driven/Chipped/Crossing/All on the Run

Shooting: Vision/On the Move/From Turns/Volleys

Heading: Attack the Ball/Judge the Ball/ To goal (down)/To Clear (up and out)

*Work on skills through game like activities where players are pressed to perform at a high speed.

Tactics: Increase Tactical Speed (Decision Making)

Individual Attackers: Attacking First Touch/Unbalance Defender/Take Risks in the Appropriate Part of the Field/Do at Speed

Individual Defending: Angle and distance of cover. Delaying and pressuring as a group

Small Group Attacking: 2v1, 2v2, 3v1, 3v2, 3v3, 4v4

Spacing/Angles off the Ball/Recognize when to Attack and when to Possess/Play Simple (the way you face)/Keep the Ball Moving (1-2 touches/Move off the ball as it travels from one person to the next/Combine (wall pass/overlaps, takeovers, double pass)

Small Group Defending: 2v1, 2v2, 3v1, 3v2, 3v3

Pressure as a Group/Cover Behind/ Balance /Depth/Compactness/1st
Defender/Mental Toughness to be Patience and Disciplined/ 2nd Defender/3rd
Defender/Communication

Team Attacking: Keep possession. Play away from pressure. Movement of players within the
team shape. Encourage risk taking in the attacking third.

Team Defending: Maintain good defensive shape. Zonal concepts. Recognize when to delay
or step. Maintain good pressure and cover throughout all areas of the field.

***A Great Deal of Coaching/Teaching within 4 v 4 Games**

Physical: All Fitness Work with the Ball

Flexibility- Dynamic stretching
Agility - Coordination on the Ball
Strength
Endurance

**Psychological: The Game Should Remain Fun and Enjoyable. Players Should Have a Passion
for the Game!**

Imagination/Creativity
Increase Demands
Establish Training Targets
Maintain Discipline
Encourage to Watch High Level Soccer



U15-U16: The Dedication Stage

Ages Group Considerations:

This is a critical time in a player's development. Many stop playing due to other interests, lack of success, and shortage of playing opportunities, poor leadership or other reasons. Players tend to be mentally tough, self-confident, but with a need for attention and security. There is a need for team spirit, leadership and discipline within the team. (MYSA)

Coach: Charismatic; Experienced; Knowledgeable; Articulate; Disciplinarian; Managerial Know How; Thoughtful Persuader

Recommended Coaching Education: MYSA State D License (36 hours) and/or
USSF National D License (36 hours) and/or
USSF National C License (70 hours) and/or
NSCAA Youth Level V U11-U18 (18 hours) and/or
NSCAA Youth Level VI Diploma (21 hours) and/or
NSCAA National Diploma (45 hours)

Skills: Players should have all basic skills mastered and now be pressed to perform them at a high speed, under pressure, and with cleanliness. Technical work should be worked on in game like activities where the appropriate amount of pressure is applied. With too little pressure players are bored and with too much they are frustrated. Play with the size of the playing space and number of defenders to find the appropriate amount of pressure.

- Individual Skill Covered during the Warm-Up
- Increase Technical Speed
- Strike Balls Cleanly over Distance with Accuracy under Pressure

Tactics: Increase decision making and speed of play.

Individual: Decisions based on the thirds of the field.

Attacking:

Recognition of where a player is at on the field and the appropriate "risk taking" a player can make in that position. Knowing a player's role and responsibility within the big picture of the team.

Defending:

Recognizing how quality pressure on the ball effects team defending.
Being able to read the game to take away the appropriate options from attackers.

Small Group: 3v3, 4v4, 5v5, 7v7

Attacking:

Recognize when to Attack and when to Possess
Move off the ball as it travels from one person to the next
Immediate Support off the Ball
Stretch the Field off the Ball with Width and Depth
Play Simple (the way you face)
Work Combinations: wall pass, overlaps, takeovers, double pass, etc.
Crossing: picking out a running rather than just putting it in the box
Set plays

Defending:

Compactness
Cover, Balance, Depth
Communication: Who, What, When, Where
Group/Mental Toughness to be Patient and Disciplined
Pressure and Win the ball as a group
Zonal Defending Concepts

Team: Clearly defined tactics

Attacking:

Decisions based on the thirds of the field
Sustain possession for the correct moment in the correct area
Maintaining team shape moving off the ball to unbalance the opponent

Defending:

Pressure based on support behind the ball
Understanding of zonal and man marking principles
Delaying attackers until support behind the ball arrives

*** A Great Deal of Coaching/Teaching within 7v7 Games**

Physical: Fitness Work With and Without the Ball

Flexibility - Dynamic stretching before playing and static stretching after playing
Agility - With and Without the Ball
Endurance - Aerobic and Anaerobic
Strength - Upper and Lower Body
Nutrition - Proper Diet: Pre-Game, Post-Game, Tournaments, etc.
Prevention and Care of Injuries

Psychological:

Increased Concentration
Leadership/Player Responsibilities
Discipline
Respect for the Game
Goal Setting
Vary Program - Satisfy Player's Urge for Competition
Encourage to Watch High Level Soccer



U17-U19: The Elite Stage

Ages Group Considerations:

Fulfillment of a player's potential depends on his or her own efforts, the support of his or her teammates and the unselfish guidance of his or her coach. He/She must be exposed to a playing and training environment, which extends his/her mental, physical and technical **capabilities to the limit**. He/She must have a sound understanding of the game's principles and concepts. Players should show emotional stability when confronted with pressure situations. Demanding and Challenging training sessions and matches are a must! (MYSA)

Coach: Charismatic, Well Informed; Up to Date; Experienced; Knowledgeable; Articulate; Disciplinarian – No Doubts about His/Her Authority; Managerial Know How

Recommended Coaching Education: USSF National D License (36 hours) or
USSF National C License (70 hours) or

MYSA State D License (36 hours) plus at least 1 of the NSCAA
courses listed below

NSCAA Youth Level V U11-U18 (18 hours) and/or
NSCAA Youth Level VI Diploma (21 hours) and/or
NSCAA National Diploma (45 hours)

Skills: Players should have all basic skills mastered and now be pressed to perform them at a high speed, under pressure, and with cleanliness. Technical work should be worked on in game like activities where the appropriate amount of pressure is applied. With too little pressure players are bored. Play with the size of the playing space and number of defenders to find the appropriate amount of pressure. Demand a high pace of play and accuracy on the ball.

Tactics: Increase Tactical Speed (Decision Making) Under Increased Pressure

Individual:

Attacking:

- Recognition of where a player is at on the field and the appropriate “risk taking” a player can make in that position.
- Confidence to hold possession and solve problems as an individual
- Knowing a player’s role and responsibility within the big picture of the team.

Defending:

- Recognizing how quality pressure on the ball effects team defending.
- Being able to read the game to take away the appropriate options from attackers.

Small Group:Attacking:

Possession with a Purpose
Combination play with tactical implications
Penetration with creativity
Counter Attacking
Crossing with proper runs in the box
Set plays

Defending:

Compactness
Cover, Balance, Depth
Recognition of double team opportunities
Communication: Who, What, When, Where
Group/Mental Toughness to be Patient and Disciplined
Controlling the speed and direction of the game with defensive decisions

Team: Understanding of Lines and LinkageAttacking:

Decisions based on the thirds of the field
Penetration with creativity and movement off the ball
Maintaining team shape moving off the ball to unbalance the opponent

Defending:

Pressure based on support behind the ball
Understanding of zonal and man marking principles
Delaying attackers until support behind the ball arrives

*** A Great Deal of Coaching/Teaching within 8v8 and 11v11 Games****Physical: Fitness Work With and Without the Ball**

Flexibility - Dynamic stretching before playing and static stretching after playing
Agility - With and Without the Ball
Endurance - Aerobic and Anaerobic
Strength - Upper and Lower Body
Nutrition - Proper Diet: Pre-Game, Post-Game, Tournaments, etc.
Prevention and Care of Injuries

Psychological:

Increased Concentration
Leadership/Player Responsibilities
Discipline
Respect for the Game
Self Confidence/Self-Motivation Goal Setting
Vary Program - Satisfy Player's Urge for Competition
Will to Win
Encourage to Watch High Level Soccer