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# The Importance of Coaching Techniques in Soccer Players before 14 Years Old



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## Abstract

It takes many years to develop into a quality soccer player. Indeed, continued development can be seen even in young professional players. Soccer is a long-term development and late specialization sport. Striving to improve individual, group and team performance is more important at the youth level than the score line. A significant investment of practice time and effort is required to reach an elite level of performance. Long-term planning is important for players to succeed, as well as better learning and proper implementation of the technique in soccer players under 14 years old.

**Keywords:** Techniques; Soccer players; Children

## Introduction

The relative age effect is a focus of discussion in youth soccer [1]. In many youth sports, size in itself may be a significant factor affecting success at young age levels where strength, speed and power are often at a premium, in turn bringing successful players to the attention of coaches and trainers. Those successful at young ages, in turn, may have an enhanced opportunity for special attention for example, selection for select teams, better coaching and so on.

Soccer is a long-term development and late specialization sport [2]. US Soccer uses Player Development Structure, giving broad direction to soccer environments while impacting the development of youth players. These are divided in three part below:

- a) Zone one (U-6 to U-12) has a technical emphasis that is accomplished by focusing on player development versus match outcome. The intent is for coaches, administrators and parents of the players to spotlight the process of playing the game, rather than the score. The measurement of success in Zone 1 is the players' improvement of ball skills, understanding of the rules of the game, playing fairly and learning general game principles.
- b) Zone 2 (U-14 to U-17) the emphasis is on the club culture and daily training atmosphere. There must be more training sessions and fewer matches so the players can learn the details of tactics, team formations and game strategies.

Matches should be fewer in number and of an appropriate level of competition.

- c) Zone 3 (U-18 +) takes the player toward professional player development. This development will occur in college, semi-pro and professional and youth national teams. This is the age to focus on the outcome of the match as well as the quality of performance [3].

Prior to a player being expected to learn ball skills the child must first be in control of the body. This growth in athleticism is a long-term evolution. It is imperative for children to acquire a base of general balance, coordination and agility before soccer skills [4]. Essentially, the foundation of movement education must be laid during childhood. This requirement is of primary importance to the youngest players, making ball skills secondary in importance. For some important reason, we shall express about that why should be taught techniques before 14 years old. For giving correct explanation about this question, we have to consider important components of training and leaning process in soccer players under 14 years old.

## Physical and Physiological Factors

An understanding of growth and maturation is important for any aspiring youth soccer coach [5]. From conception through to physical maturity, growth represents the dominant biological process of the first 20 years of life. Trainers and coaches should be aware of the individual characteristics of the adolescent

growth spurt and the training load should also be individualized at this time [6]. Growth itself has a particular definition and although sometimes used interchangeably with development, growth is represented by an increase in size or quantity. For some reasons which are considering below, technical training should be taught before 14 years old.

### Increasing of Weight after 14 Years Old

After 14 years of age the rate of increase in weight slows. The maximum rate of weight gain of 20-25kg for boys occurs between 12 and 16 years of age whilst about 10kg is gained between 16 and 20 years of age. Some researchers have shown that increasing of weight can reduced the agility and speed in children [7]. Connection between physical and technical performance has been proved by some studies [8,9].

### Skeletal Improvement

Skeletal weight increases in parallel with height and weight growth curves from about 15 percent of total weight in childhood.

### Flexibility

The flexibility scores of children are stable between 5 and 11 years and then increase dramatically to age 14 after which values level off. These changes relate to anatomical changes in leg and trunk length through adolescence. Flexibility is important factor to learn techniques in soccer players. After 14 years old flexibility will be decreased and In the process of learning is effective.

It is clear that during growth and development, soccer performance improved as players grew stronger, faster and had more endurance [10,11]. Furthermore, their skills and game understanding became more sophisticated [12]. Nevertheless, scientists are unsure of the precise effects that growth and development have on performance and whether it is influenced by sustained periods of sport-specific training. Intuitively, a combination of growth and training would be expected to optimize performance but there are limited data on this aspect of youth soccer.

### Acquiring Skills before 14 Years Old

In order to perform at the highest level, players have to spend many hours in deliberate, purposeful practice with the specific intention of improving performance [1]. Although practice on its own does not guarantee success, there is no substitute for earnest endeavor in the pursuit of excellence. Some players may be more genetically predisposed to benefit from practice effects, but no players have reached the elite level without a significant commitment to the process of refining and developing their soccer skills. Ward and co-workers (2004) showed that those who are recruited by Premier League Academies in England at 16 years of age typically started playing the game at 6 years of age and over the next 10 years devoted an average of 15 hours per week, 700 hours per year (over 7,000 hours in total) to practice activities related to soccer. It is likely that at least 10,000 hours of practice are required before these players are

ready for their debut in the first team. The academy players also considered practice, along with the motivation to succeed, to be the most important factors in becoming an elite player, whereas, in contrast, less skilled players considered skill and teamwork to be the key factors underpinning success [13].

Richard Schmidt [14], a motor learning and motor development expert, developed a schema theory (1975, 2000), which suggests that children up to age 14 should experience a wide range of movement in early life to aid in solving future movement challenges. It has been reported that "When people practice a number of specific throwing distances, they learn something that allows them to generalize this experience to the performance of many throwing distances" [14]. It shows the improving of techniques in this age would be improved other performance which are related by progressing and evolution in futures.

### The Conceptual Framework of Learning in Soccer Players U14

The early specialization of sport skills has a limiting effect on child development [15]. Sport skills require specific motor patterns and a child should be exposed to a wide range of movement experiences early in life. Balance, center of gravity, length of limbs, body mass, and gross and fine motor control all play a part in a child's ability to move effectively. Within the same age group, some are shorter or taller than others, some have better balance, and others fall down quite often. As a result, we cannot pass false judgment on a child whose development is a little slower than the rest of the team.

Activities should be designed in which players are provided the opportunity to practice a wide range of locomotor movements (running, skipping, hopping, galloping, leaping, etc.), no locomotor movements (bending, pulling, twisting, pushing, etc.) and other movement components such as balance, change of direction, strength, and cardiovascular endurance. Although, most young children from ages 5 to 8 like to run, jump, roll, climb, skip, fall down and shout while involved in play. All this makes a strong case for them to play soccer. This behavior should be considered when adults set up a playing environment. Activities should fit the developmental levels of the children. Avoid the opposite approach of having the children fit the activities. If an activity does not fit the needs of the child, the child will show either frustration if it is too difficult or boredom if it is too easy.

Finally we should mention, soccer is natural for young children because soccer players experience body awareness and they use various body parts. How they use balance, agility, coordination, vision and social interaction can determine how they develop physical and social skills. As players get older, their development (i.e. psychomotor, cognitive and psychosocial) levels mature. This growth allows coaches to create more complexities in the training environment. For example, under-6 players must each have a ball; under-8 players should use one

ball in pairs; under-10 can share one ball among four players and one ball for eight players is appropriate for under-12 players. Table 1, shows the number of ball touches which should be performed between 5-12 years old [16,17].

**Table 1:** A possible plan for increasing players contact time with the ball.

Touches from 5 to 12 years old				
Age	Number of Days Per Year	Number of touches Per Session	Number of Years	Total Touches
5-6	120	800	2	192,000
7-9	180	800	3	432,000
10-12	240	800	3	576,000

### Conclusion

With pre-pubescent children, muscle innervations are completed roughly by the age of 6, although individual variances occur. Muscle innervations refer to the final expansion of nerve endings within a muscle fiber's interior. At the conclusion of the muscle innervations process, children are able to learn and begin the process of establishing functional ability in gross motor skills and movement patterns. At approximately age 6, it is realistic to begin teaching ball skills. Innervations are linked to coordination and motor control, so it stands to reason that children gain proficiency in gross motor skills more quickly than finer skills. This is another argument as to why early specialization is counterproductive - every sport requires various degrees of fine motor skills, which simply cannot become functional abilities in younger players.

Within a child's brain, specifically the cortex, stimulation and excitability govern over inhibition. This means young children are prone to poor concentration, especially over prolonged periods, and display indiscriminate reactions when responding to a specific situations, particularly those involving sudden changes of direction. It is clear that, Training needs do vary with age and between the sexes. Programs must be tailored to their requirements and capabilities. These considerations change according to the player's stage of development, fitness level and readiness to progress to the next training step.

However, the learning to train stage covers ages 8 to 12. The objective is to learn all of the fundamental soccer skills, building overall sports skills. In this stage, children gradually begin to change from being self-centered to self-critical and develop the need for group games. This is a flux phase in a youngster's soccer career. The motivation to learn basic skills is very high at this age. The game itself should be central to all technical training. Finally we have to mention that, an emphasis needs to be placed on skill development at this age (U13) while using a games-based approach. Practice individual skills within individual and small group tactics. These players start to move from the how

(technique) to when, where, with whom and against whom (skill - tactics).

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