

**What Can Be Learned At The Various Ages?  
 “Total Player Development”  
 US Youth Soccer Region II**

Recently the US Youth Soccer Region II Coaching Committee released a document entitled “Total Player Development”. The US Youth Soccer Region II Coaching Committee consists of all State Directors’ of Coaching within Region II. It was edited by Dr. Tom Turner who is the Director of Coaching for the Ohio North Youth Soccer Association. Below is just one section of this document. The entire document is available by contacting Vince Ganzberg, Director of Education for Indiana Youth Soccer at [vince@indianayouthsoccer.org](mailto:vince@indianayouthsoccer.org).

**What Can be Learned at the Various Ages?**

The following tables (Turner, 2006) provide a framework for training guidelines and learning expectations through the various ages. It is estimated that becoming a competent performer takes 10 years, or about 10,000 hours of training, suggesting that one of the keys to long-term player development is to effectively match training activities with the critical skills and abilities for the age group.

*What the coach purposely and deliberately teaches is seldom immediately grasped by the players.  
 Tom Turner, Educator*

The information is intended to be reflective of normal group development and does not discount the potential progress of exceptionally talented individuals.

	U-6	U-7/8	U-9/10	U-11/12	U-13/16	U-16-18
<b>Field Players</b>						
Body Awareness	Yes	Yes	Transition	No	No	No
ABC’s: Agility, Balance, Coordination	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Speed Activities	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Basic Motor Skills	Yes	Yes	Transition	No	No	No
Basic Sports Skills	Yes	Yes	Transition	No	No	No
Ball Manipulation Activities	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Elementary Tactics	Yes	Yes	Transition	No	No	No
Elementary Game Rules	Yes	Yes	Transition	No	No	No
Formal Game Rules	No	Transition	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Development of Spatial Awareness	No	No	Transition	Yes	Yes	Yes
Development of Positional Awareness	No	No	Transition	Yes	Yes	Yes
% Training to % Competition Ratio	100 : 0	100 : 0	70 : 30	70 : 30	60 : 40	50 : 50
Formal Warm-up	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Mastery of Basic Motor Skills	No	No	No	Transition	Yes	Yes
Introduction of Basic Soccer Skills	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Transition	No
Introduction of Advanced Soccer Skills	No	No	Transition	Yes	Yes	Yes
Basic Game Rules	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No
Small Group Tactical Problems	No	No	Yes	Yes	Transition	No
Individual Speed of Play	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Group Speed of Play	No	No	Transition	Yes	Yes	Yes
Team Speed of Play	No	No	No	No	Transition	Yes
General Fitness	No	No	No	Transition	Yes	Yes

Soccer Specific Fitness	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Expanded Tactical Insight	No	No	No	No	Yes	Yes
Aerobic and Strength Development	No	No	No	No	Yes	Yes
Functional Training	No	No	No	Transition	Yes	Yes
Functional Fitness	No	No	No	No	Yes	Yes
Game Tactics	No	No	No	Transition	Yes	Yes
Use of Free weights	No	No	No	No	Transition	Yes
Individual Psychology Training	No	No	No	No	Yes	Yes
Team Psychology Training	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Psychology of Teambuilding	No	No	No	No	Transition	Yes
Specific High Intensity Individual Fitness	No	No	No	No	No	Yes
Recovery and Regeneration	No	No	No	No	Transition	Yes

## Goalkeeper Development

Goalkeepers also demonstrate developmental markers that help focus coaching.

	U-6	U-7/8	U-9/10	U-11/12	U-13/16	U-16-18
<b>Goalkeepers</b>						
Basic Catching Skills	All	All	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Basic Footwork	No	All	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Crossing Situations	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
GK Specific Fitness	No	No	No	Transition	Yes	Yes
Angles	No	No	Transition	Yes	Yes	Yes
Starting Positions	No	No	No	Transition	Yes	Yes
As a supporting player	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Communication	No	No	Transition	Yes	Yes	Yes
Organization	No	No	No	No	Transition	Yes
GK Specific Fitness	No	No	No	Transition	Yes	Yes
Game Tactics	No	No	No	No	Transition	Yes
Collapsing	No	No	Transition	Yes	Yes	Yes
Power Diving	No	No	No	Transition	Yes	Yes

## The Phases of Play by Age

All invasion sports, including soccer, have naturally occurring moments that are referred to as the “phases” of play. The following table offers guidelines on when the formal teaching of the phases of play should begin.

	U-6	U-7/8	U-9/10	U-11/12	U-13/16	U-16-18
<b>The Natural Evolution of Phases of Play</b>						
Attacking the Goal	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Defending the Goal	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Counter-attacking	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Defending Against the Counter-attack	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Building up / Circulating the ball in the Defensive Half	No	No	Transition	Yes	Yes	Yes
Building up / Circulating the ball in the Attacking Half	No	No	Transition	Yes	Yes	Yes
Attacking Restarts	No	No	No	Transition	Yes	Yes
Defensive Restarts	No	No	No	Transition	Yes	Yes

