

Coaching - Tip of the Week

This week, we look at an excerpt from Dr. Ron Quinn's "*The Peak Performance - Soccer Games For Player Development*"

"Obviously, the youth levels and in particular the early youth levels, (ages 6-12) are the most important in the development of a player. All soccer educators strongly recommend that each child train with a ball and play on Small-sided teams. The more a person touches the ball the more the motor pattern becomes defined.

If there are fewer people on the field, the greater the opportunity for each child to participate fully. Again, this is a major factor in the development of a soccer player. One accomplishment should be that every club has a trained professional coach who directs the training programs and oversees player development. In my opinion, the overriding theme for clubs is the need to identify and develop the "soccer mind," not just teach the technical tools. We must develop players who seek challenges, can quickly solve problems, are creative, and can stay on task for the game duration. Along this line of thought, youth players are taught the "basic skills," (dribbling, passing, etc.) The basics behind the skills are overlooked – the movement concepts as well as problem solving, decision making, generating alternatives, and creativity. You must teach these skills just as dribbling and passing. Yet very little of a youth players early training provides any opportunity for the development of such necessary soccer and life skills. Players are told where to play and stay, when to pass, where to dribble, etc. We must approach the development of a soccer player from a cognitive, social, and emotional developmental perspective, as well as the physical.

Coaches need to become more aware of the stages of growth and development of a child as they relate to the demands and expectations placed on a youth player. Most people would agree that children couldn't think like an adult. Then why do we expect them to play like one?"

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