

Spring, 2011

Dear Coaches, Players, and Parents;

Middleton Youth Soccer is pleased to share with you an innovative approach to youth soccer development. MYS has focused resources on a broad program for age appropriate development and coaching training to benefit both our coaches and players. This includes development of curriculum for U-4 through U-12 as well as our support for coach licensing.

To complement our curriculum development and coach training, the organization is proud to share with our members an educational approach to teaching; creating rubrics (linking criteria to a standard) for MYS soccer. The purpose of “Focus and Reasonable expectations” is to chart the progression of age appropriate developmental for our children as they progress through the program.

For coaches, we have provided guidelines for teaching that are supported and integrated with Massachusetts Youth Soccer Coach licensing courses as well as Middleton Youth Soccer curriculum efforts. For parents/players, it is hoped that this explains what might be “reasonable expectations” for players at each age focusing on children who participate in our program.

“Focus and Reasonable Expectations” is only a guideline; intended to enlighten and educate. We all know that all children are different; and their learning and progress can take place at different paces. We hope that it inspires our players, coaches, and parents.

If our approach is 90% effective at charting a direction, supporting our coaches, and helping our children, we will be hugely successful in the areas of development.

Best regards;
Middleton Youth Soccer

Acknowledgements for “Focus and Reasonable Expectations”:

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U8 Soccer Focus/ Expectations

Revised 2/22/11

Reasonable Expectations after two years of training at U-8

Soccer Skill	Focus/Philosophy	Reasonable Expectations after two years of training at U-8
Dribbling	Dribbling should be the main focus of training. Dribbling skills should include step over, roll over, pull back, dribbling with inside/outside part of the foot.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Players should be able to dribble past (in a 1 v 1 situation) a player of equal size/skill about 25% of the time. • Should be able to cut the ball in both directions. • Players should be able to slowly dribble through cones with head up – not under pressure. • Player should feel comfortable moving the ball with all surfaces of the foot.
Shielding	Players should frequently be exposed to shielding drills.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A player should understand the concept of shielding and should be able to shield the ball from a player of equal size/skill for a at least a five count “most of the time”.
Receiving	Focus on soft first touch and keeping the ball from bouncing away.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Should be able to trap a ball without stepping on it. • Players should be able to control a medium paced ball within an area of a couple steps so that a “soccer move” can follow.
Fouls	Players should be introduced to what is a foul and what is not. Coaches should quickly stop “roughhouse” play and transition it to soccer appropriate behavior.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Players should be aware of the concept of a foul.
Defending	Little focus on this skill. Players learn naturally through the game.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Players should begin to understand how to retreat on a counterattack.
Juggling	Introduce juggling.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Players should be able to juggle 2 or 3 times on the thigh or foot.
Passing	Players should be introduced to proper passing technique. Every drill should emphasize “both feet”.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Should be able to pass without pressure, to a teammate at 6 to 8 yards away with dominant foot. • Should be able to pass with weaker foot at least 3 to 5 yards away.
Shooting	At U-8, correct shooting technique should be introduced. Shooting will be	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Players should be able to shoot the ball with some accuracy using either foot.

	<p>the greatest variable based on strength and ability. There should be minimal time spent on shooting drills as musculature has not developed on most players and the games will not require hard shooting. Focus on both feet.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Players should know that the ball should be struck with laces, but, also an accurate shot can be a pass into the net. • A player should be able to shoot without using the toe most of the time.
Throw ins	<p>Throw in training should be very simple. Explain the technique for a few minutes one early practice. Coach should watch individuals doing throw ins during games and very occasionally correct technique such as raising a foot.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A player should be able to throw the ball in using correct technique with occasional mistakes. • Players should know how to throw “down the line” with the ball coming straight over the head and without jumping or lifting feet.
Positions/Tactics	<p>There should be little emphasis on positions at U-8. It is best to not assign positions during games and let the game teach the players. Players should NOT be taught to “stay in your position”. There should be some transitioning from the kick the ball and chase it game to a dribble, occasional pass game. They should be transitioning out of dribblers and single mindedness, but still be a little selfish with the ball. Most players will not understand the concept of creating space.</p>	<p>Through play, the players should understand what to do in the three moments of the game:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We have the ball • They have the ball • We just lost the ball (transition) <p>Players should begin to understand that it is safer to dribble to where there are no other players (space).</p>
Vocabulary	<p>This is an ideal time to start working on soccer vocabulary introducing topics consistent with the skills being taught.</p>	<p>Players should be able to understand and explain the following terms:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support • Square • Far post • Through ball • Man on • Shield • One touch

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Two touch • Goal side • Corner Kick • Goal Kick
Heading Set plays Slide tackling	Not appropriate for this age	

Although U8 children may begin to be far more physically and mentally advanced than U6 children, we must remain patient and not try to force them to develop too quickly. Dribbling still needs to be the primary focus of our efforts, through passing and shooting should be introduced at this age as well. U8 players tend to work best when in pairs and we should allow them to work in pairs (coach selected) often. Similar to the U6 children, we need to make sure that fun is a central theme in practice. Player development will occur most appropriately and expeditiously if all players are enjoying themselves.

U10 Soccer Focus/ Expectations

Revised 2/22/11

Reasonable Expectations after two years of training at U-10

Soccer Skill	Focus/Philosophy	Reasonable Expectations after two years of training at U-10
Dribbling	<p>Dribbling should be the main focus of every warm-up stage of training. Dribbling skills should involve exaction of moves with speed, using both feet and multiple feet.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be comfortable running with the ball • Be able to start to demonstrate fakes in the dribble • Be able to dribble/beat an unskilled defender by use of simple cuts and change of pace
Shielding	<p>Players should work on shielding during the warm-up phase. Try to shield with the outside of the foot pushing the ball away from pressure.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emphasize basic shielding technique • Try to make sure the player is “sideways to the ball” 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be able to shield the ball and hold the ball in a 1 v 1 situation for the count of 8 against a player of equal size and skill at least 50% of the time.
Receiving	<p>The player’s first touch should be the main emphasis when trying to receive the ball. Try to keep the ball close the body but do not stop the ball from moving</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduce directional trapping of the ball away from pressure • Receiving ground balls with the instep and outside of foot • Receiving bouncing balls with instep • Introduce concept of receiving balls with the chest, thighs and feet raised 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be able to execute a decent chest trap (and decide whether to use the head or chest as the ball is coming in). • Be able to receive/control with 2 touches/then push pass a moving ball thru cones 1 yard apart at a distance of 4 yards (2-3 yards with non-dominant). • Be able to receive a well-struck ball passed with the inside of both feet, and with at least the outside of the dominant foot.
Fouls	<p>Players should know the rules of the game. The player still might not be able to control the body to prevent rough play.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Players should understand the difference between what is a foul and what is aggressive play.
Defending	<p>Should be no more complicated than</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Players should know the basic rules for a first defender

	<p>encouraging the player to try to win the ball back when possession is lost.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is no emphasis on “team defending’ other than emphasizing that all players are ‘defenders” when the other team has the ball. • Players should be encouraged to “legally tackle” an opponent to regain possession. • Go for the ball when it is off the opponents foot 	<p>(delay/deny), and be able to successfully mark/hold an attacker of similar size/speed/skill for a count of about 7-8 at least 50% of the time.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Players should be able to execute a basic standing tackle and shoulder charge.
Juggling	<p>This is a technique that should only be attempted at the beginning and end of training. No more than five minutes allocated to this technique. If this is embraced by players their first touch will improve drastically. Work on juggling at the end of training for a cool down and/or set target numbers for “homework”</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be able to juggle the ball with the foot or thigh at least 5-10 times.
Passing	<p>Players should be able to pass to teammates with the concept to trying to possess the ball (keep away). They should also start to identify the concept of passing into space for a teammate to run on to the ball.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Passing for possession • Passing into space • Pass with the instep drive 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be able to pass a stationary ball thru cones 1 yard apart at distances of 6 yards with dominant foot. Be able to pass accurately with non-dominant foot at the 3 yard distance. • Be able to execute a lofted kick/chip which will clear an average-sized player in their age bracket. • Be able to pass the ball appropriately to a teammate who is 10 yards or more away, both when teammate is stationary and when moving (i.e., understands the concept of leading a moving player so that she does not overrun the ball).
Shooting	<p>The player should focus on the importance of shooting on the net. Also try to encourage the use of both feet while attempting a shot. Finally,</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be able to execute a “laces” kick with some power and accuracy.

	introduce the importance of following your shot.	
Throw ins	<p>Throw ins will become more prevalent at this age. Players should know the proper technique. Very little time should be spent on throw in technique. It should be practiced at training during the scrimmage phase of training, not during any other stage.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reinforcement of correct technique • Look for accuracy and distance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understand the basic rules on throw-ins, and be able to execute them properly.
Position/ Tactics	<p>The concept of positions should be introduced. All players should play all positions sometime during the season. Players should recognize the three main moments in the game.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. We have the ball 2. They have the ball 3. Transitioning between the two <p>Players should understand the concept that the game is made up of triangles all over the field.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduce principals of attacking, defending, transitions and possession • Introduce the concept that the game is made up of triangles • Defensive balance on the field • Switching the field • Spacing of field players • Introduce the concept of unbalance the defense during an attack 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Players should start to understand the concept of creating triangles during a game • Understand basic principles of keepaway (talking, taking the ball where the defenders aren't, basic rules of support triangles, planning your reception to take ball into space/away from pressure).
Vocabulary	Soccer vocabulary introducing topics consistent with the skills being	<p>Terms to understand</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “switch the field”

	taught.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Pressure, cover, balance” • “1st attacker, 2nd attacker, 3rd attacker” • Square, through • Wall pass (give and go, 1-2) • Understand usual game rules (restarts, fouls, fair play, ref signals, basic offsides if applicable).
Heading	<p>Let the “players determine when heading is introduced”. If you see players heading the ball in practice/games take the time to introduce proper heading form. Boys will be significantly more advanced than girls in this technique.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Show how to head the ball properly • Introduce the essentials of heading but spend very little time on heading in training 	<p>Player should be able to head and direct a fairly gentle ball (Don’t even think of attempting teeth-rattlers until around U13 or so).</p>
Set Plays	<p>Players should understand what to do during a corner kick and a free kick. This is a very simple concept. On corner kicks, offensively try to keep the ball in play. Defensively try to clear the ball out of the penalty area. On free kicks, offensively try to get the ball down field and out of the middle. Defensively, try to get back behind the ball far enough so that it does not go over your head.</p>	<p>Player should understand basic responsibilities (where to stand, what is going to happen, movement) of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Corner kicks • Free kick defensive and offensive • Let the players with some guidance determine how to execute the free kick. No need to script free kicks for the players. Let them use their creativity and ingenuity. • Focus on maintaining possession of the ball
Goalkeeping	<p>At this age some players will start to identify themselves as “goal keepers”. Try to work on basic goal keepers techniques during shooting exercises in training.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The keeper as the last defender • Pass back to the Keeper option 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All players should be comfortable playing the position • Players should be able to demonstrate that the keeper does not simply “stand on the goal line and wait to be shot at”; instead being part of the game and coming out and making decisions • Should be able to dive to stop a ball. • Should be able to kick a goal kick over the 14. Should

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How to hold the ball after a save • Goal kick • Punt Technique • Throwing the ball technique 	not rely on another player to do this.
Sportsmanship/ Behavioral Expectations	Coaches at this age have a significant influence on behavior of players. Encourage responsibility; teach by demonstrating respect for “the game”. Players now begin to understand the concept of team and responsibility. The coach is a behavioral role model.	Player should understand/follow the team rules (paying attention, bringing proper equipment to practice, cleanup, subbing, calling if late/missing, no hassle of teammates, etc.). Player should also understand respect for “the game”, officials, teammates, and coaches.

As we move up the age ladder from the U8 level to the U10 level there are many differences we must attend to in order to provide an optimal experience for young players of this age. However, there are also many similarities. Just as in parenting, it is important to be consistent in coaching and we must make sure that we follow a progressive trend of development for young players. To this ends, we need to continue to focus on technique during our practices, as we did at the younger ages. Creating environments in which players get maximum repetitions of technical skills is important. Players at this age should still work on ball mastery and demonstrate growing familiarity with a ball at their feet.

U12 Soccer Focus/ Expectations

Revised 2/22/11

Reasonable Expectations after two years of training at U-12

Soccer Skill	Focus/Philosophy	Reasonable Expectations after two years of training at U-12
Dribbling	Dribbling should be used during the warm up phase of training. It is very important at this age to stress dribbling with speed. Also the importance of taking on a defender 1v1 should be stressed.	Player should: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be able to go 1 v 1 in attacking third of the field • Understand where and when to dribble • Use a variety of moves and feints • Understand where the ball should be in relation to the body (close in pressure; bigger touches in space) • Change of direction and pace should be evident • Able to perform some basic “moves” such as Cryuff, Maradona, etc. in pressured practice and game conditions.
Receiving	Receiving the ball with all surfaces of the foot and multiple body parts should be a major focus. Make sure to focus on using both feet to receive.	Player should: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Receive with all surfaces (foot, thigh, chest) and drop a firmly struck ball within two steps if necessary • Ensure that the Player's first touch should be in positive space (productive receiving) or in a direction that prepares you for your next decision. • Be able to receive a moving ball while in motion into space • Be able to receive the ball under pressure
Attacking	The purpose of possession is to be able to attack the opponent's goal. The focus is to maintain possession of the ball but move “forward” into the attacking 1/3 of the field.	Player should: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Able to Create space to receive the ball, pass, and dribbling of shooting the ball. • Able to maintain possession of the ball while driving at defenders and make decisions (pass, dribble, shoot) under pressure • Understand and demonstrate during practice and game conditions the concept of switching the point of attack to gain numerical and space advantages • Understanding passing angles
Defending	A major focus should be emphasized during training on individual defensive technique and group defending. Also a	Player should: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Know when to poke/ block tackle and when to contain • Understand the proper defensive stance approaching side

	focus should be what to do with the ball after it has been won.	<p>on to an attacking player</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understand the concept of closing quickly, and attacking slowly • Understand and demonstrate in pressure situations the concept of deny (the ball, the turn) delay (contain), and tackle (when appropriate), • Demonstrate composure when being attacked 1v1 • Learn the concept of pressure, cover, balance (1st, 2nd, 3rd defenders) • Be able to appropriately decide when to challenge for a 50/50 ball from a defensive position • Be able to demonstrate, in game conditions, attacking from a defensive position • Understand and demonstrate why the defense should push up when the ball is cleared up field, the team moves up as a unit. • Understand and demonstrates goal side man marking
Passing	Passing at this age should be the main focus of most training sessions. Stressing the proper technique and weight of the pass should be reiterated constantly.	<p>Player should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pass with proper weight, accuracy and timing • Player should be trying a variety of passes (driven, chipped, crosses, short and long) • Players should demonstrate proper technique while passing • Pass effectively under pressure and on the run
Shooting	The player should focus on the importance of shooting on net. Also try to encourage the use of both feet while attempting a shot. Finally, introduce the importance of following your shot.	<p>Player should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be able to shoot with enough power, using laces, such that 1 out of 2 shots from the 18 will challenge a reasonably skilled goalie and 1 out of 6 will score. (without pressure) • Same as above with weak foot from 18 challenging goalie 1 out of 3 times. (without pressure) • Understand and use proper striking technique – power shots are not taken with the toe. • Be able to take on a defender and shoot from angles • Be able to shoot under pressure/ showing good balance • Use both feet while shooting
Throw ins	At this age throw-ins should be a	Player should:

	<p>routine part of the game. They should be used during the scrimmage phase of the training.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Player should be able to make a legal throw in nearly 100% of the time. (not lifting back foot or throwing from side) • Player should be able to legally throw the ball at least 15 yards • Player should be able to make good soccer decisions when throwing ball against pressure (down the line, to an open teammate)
<p>Position/ Tactics</p>	<p>Players should be aware of all the positions on the 11 v 11 field. Some players will start to “specialize” in a position. (Defense, Midfield, Forward, GK) but should be encouraged to continue to try and play in all positions Players should recognize the three main moments in the game.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. We have the ball 2. They have the ball 3. Transitioning between the two <p>Also players should understand that the game is made up of triangles all over the field.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduce the concept of keeping defensive balance on the field • Introduce change in direction, back passing, playing/running into space, switch the field • Teach off-sides and the off-sides trap 	<p>Player should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understands how to open up the field. Try to find space on the sides of the field or by passing up through the last defender • Understands and demonstrates the concept of depth and width • Under pressure, player begins to demonstrate concept of playing to a teammate rather than “booting” up the middle when defending • Players should understand the concepts of “making a run” even if the ball is not passed. • Players should understand the concept of “creating space” vs “occupying space” • Passing the ball wide from the defense is usually better than up the middle
<p>Vocabulary</p>	<p>Soccer vocabulary introducing topics consistent with the skills being taught.</p>	<p>Terms to understand:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “space” • “push up” • “contain” • “out wide” • “pressure, cover, balance’ • “first attacker” • “second attacker”

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “third attacker” “man on” • “turn” • “drop back”
Heading	<p>Player should start to begin to be comfortable heading the ball. In training begin to teach the proper technique.</p> <p>Forehead contact on the ball, eyes open to meet the ball and direct the ball with unopposed service from the front</p>	<p>Player should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proper form to avoid injury • High and wide for defensive headers • Low and hard for offensive headers • Player should be able to head a ball tossed 20 feet in the air into the net at 11 yards 2 out of 3 times
Set Plays	<p>At this age maintaining possession of the ball during/ after the free kick should be the focus. Defensively try to get back behind the ball and mark a player. At this age, many players do not have the power to kick a corner to a dangerous spot in front of the goal</p>	<p>Player should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Free kicks – Players should try to keep possession in a free kick opportunity. Try to play the ball forward to a teammate • Player should be able to participate in and understand the reasons for at least three types of corner kicks (short, driven, passed) and two types of direct kicks,
Goalkeeping	<p>At this age player will start to identify themselves as goalkeepers. It is fine to allow this to occur but stress the importance of having strong foot skills.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduce the keeper as the last defender and the one in control of the defensive line. • Encourage passing back to the keeper to create space 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keepers should be punting, throwing, bowling the ball making decisions on appropriate distribution moving from defending to attack • All players at this age should be able to play keeper and not be frightened by the role • Players should be able to “dive” for a ball using two hands to stop the ball.

The period this age group is entering is often referred to as the dawn of tactics. Typically players of this age begin to understand the basic tactical situations of the game and are more aware of movement off the ball and the reasons for tactical choices. Problem solving becomes systematic and these players tend to learn quickly. Children of this age typically are beginning to develop abstract awareness, so they can understand coaches when we talk about space and the runs off the ball. However, just because they understand these basic developing tactical concepts does not mean we should focus on these concepts entirely. Players are still developing technically at this age, especially as they go through growth spurts and awkward phases.

It is quite common to look out a U12 field and see players that are physically the size of adults. Yet, other U12 players appear as if they could still be in the 3rd grade. These children are all growing at different rates and undergoing physical, mental, emotional, and social changes. The average age for the beginning of pubescence in girls is 10 years old with a range of 7 to 14; for boys it is age 12 with a range of 9 to 16. As coaches, we need to be sensitive to these changes and their social implications when coaching this age group. Some players may pick up skills quickly, where as others may struggle. However, it may be the case that this is simply the result of differences in maturation. In a year, the slower developer may surpass the player who developed earlier. For this reason we need to be patient and keep an open mind about all players through these years. They are aware of their struggles more than anyone else as peer evaluation is omnipresent at these ages. When we see them struggling, it is important for us to help them and to keep the game fun.

U14 Soccer Focus/ Expectations

Revised 2/22/11

Reasonable Expectations after two years of training at U-14

Soccer Skill	Focus/Philosophy	Reasonable Expectations after two years of training at U-14
Dribbling	<p>Dribbling at this age should be done with speed and with both feet all the time. You should stress that the first touch is of high importance when beating a defender and determining the direction you will dribble. Having a “positive” first touch will lead to being “comfortable on the ball”.</p>	<p>A player should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Show a great understanding of change of pace and direction • Effectively use a variety of moves and feints in a game situation or at game speed in a practice situation • Dribble to create space and cross, shoot, or pass the ball with both feet under pressure. Weaker foot should be at least 75% of stronger foot
Receiving	<p>Receiving the ball with all surfaces of the foot and also focus on other body parts to receive the ball. This should be done with speed and a purpose for you next step/move.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Should begin to understand what is a “productive” reception of a pass. • Training should include playing with back to the goal, distribution, turning, and/or facing up. 	<p>A player should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be able to move behind the ball and receive it with inside and outside part of the foot away from a pressuring defender. • Be able to receive the ball out of the air using top of either foot, sole, thigh chest and head and turn it into a pass or volley if decision is appropriate. • Turn with the ball while facing away from the opposition goal using the inside and outside part of the foot with a body fake
Attacking	<p>The goal of attacking should be to penetrate the defense and score. To be able to score will bring a level of confidence to the player. This is something has to be done at training on a regular basis.</p>	<p>A player should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be able to create space for yourself and your teammates, with or without the ball • Player should be able to defender of similar size or skill 1v1 (facing a defender or your back to a defender) for decent shot on goal at least 1 out of five times. • Player should understand the roles of first, second and third attacker in 2 v 1, 2v 2, and 3 v 2 situations. • Understand the concept of width, depth, and penetration in order to keep possession of the ball
Defending	<p>.During training individual defense should always be stressed. Winning the ball on defense is the first tactical decision for offense. The concept of group/team defending at this age</p>	<p>A player should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understand that the first principal of defense and use it in small sided games (if the ball is lost the first defender is putting immediate pressure on the ball) • Understand and can effectively apply in a game

	<p>should be stressed during training (pressure, cover, balance)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training should include focus on denying, delay, and defend. 	<p>situation the concept of a zone/flat four defense understanding the roles of defending.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understand and demonstrate in game situations that the job of second defender is to step up if the first defender is beaten as well as denying the penetrating pass not covering a second defender. • Understand and demonstrate the concept of recover runs (where to run- often to the middle)
Passing	<p>Passing should be routine and focus on accuracy during training. (with pressure and without pressure). Practice should include adjusting to pressure and passing lanes with appropriate pace to find teammate without over passing.</p>	<p>A player should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A player should be able to demonstrate one touch passing with consistent success with both feet. • Player should be able to accurately hit diagonal passes in the air 30 yards of distance • The player should demonstrate proper technique for inside and outside part of the foot and have the ball bend in flight.
Shooting	<p>A player should be focusing on accuracy as well as using both feet.</p> <p>At this level, training should include the mastery of proper technique.</p> <p>Players should understand that power can be achieved by landing on shooting foot.</p>	<p>A player should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be able to demonstrate proper shooting technique using laces under defender's pressure. • Accuracy over power • Player should be able to drive a ball if under minimum pressure, at least from outside the 18 resulting in scoring opportunities during game situations. • Shooting a bending ball using inside and outside of the foot. • Be able to volley kick, using the laces of the foot
Position/ Tactics	<p>At this age various systems of play should be introduced. For this to be successful each player must understand their role at each position.</p>	<p>A player should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase overall speed of play (technical and tactical decision making) • Able to understand and adjust to play in various systems of play (4-4-2, 4-3-3, 4-5-2) • Player should be able to understand and execute a defensive trap in a game situation.
Vocabulary	<p>Soccer vocabulary introducing topics consistent with the skills being taught.</p>	<p>Terms to understand:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Drop" • "Step" • "I have near"

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Hold”
Heading	<p>Players should be comfortable heading the ball. In training go over defensive and offensive heading.</p> <p>Players should understand the concept of “productive heading” (to a teammate, to score, to clear) rather than simply meeting the ball.</p>	<p>A player should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be able to demonstrate proper heading technique. Using the front part of the head to contact the ball, keep the eyes open until head contacts the ball use the upper body to get more power on the ball • Redirecting the flight of the ball using proper heading technique after a cross
Set Plays	<p>At this age the focus offensively should be to try to score. Defensively the main idea should be to try to win the ball and keep possession.</p>	<p>A player should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Offensively, be able to kick a corner kick on a full sided field to the penalty kick mark. • Defensively, on a corner kick, be able to man mark (goal side), 1 player on each post; clear the ball 30 yards before pulling out. • On free kicks, if the ball is within 30 yards? of the goal, serve a ball that is capable of scoring at least 30% of the time. • On free kicks, if the ball is beyond 30 yards, loft/drive a ball toward the goal frame depending on far the ball is away from the goal. •
Goalkeeping	<p>At the age a player should be receiving extra specialized goalkeeper training outside from the regular team practice. Also the keeper should be integrated into every exercise at training.</p>	<p>A player should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focus on all technical aspects of goalkeeping. (shot stopping, angles, breakaways, distribution, collapse and extension diving, and footwork) • Should be able to dive horizontally without diving “over” the ball. Should know how to effectively punch or parry in a game situation. Should know how to protect self (knee up in high catch situation, sliding should lead with legs – not head and arms. • Keepers should know how to punt, throw, and roll to distribute and to make good decisions on when to do each.

Players in this age group should already have a grasp of basic tactics and have the ability to analyze simple and complex tactical situation during full-speed game situations. Typically players of this age are more aware of movement off the ball and the reasons for tactical choices. Problem-solving becomes systematic and these players tend to learn quickly. Children of this age typically are beginning to develop abstract awareness, so they can understand coaches when we talk about space and runs off of the ball. However, just because they understand these basic tactical concepts does not mean we should focus on these concepts entirely. Players are still developing technically, especially as they go through growth spurts and awkward phases.

It is quite common to look out at a U14 field and see players that are physically the size of adults. Yet, other players appear as if they are still much younger. These players are all growing at different rates and undergoing physical, mental, emotional, and social changes, and changes and differences between boys and girls become extremely apparent. The average age for the beginning of pubescence in girls is 10 years old with a range of 7 to 14; for boys it is age 12 with a range of 9 to 16. As coaches, we need to be sensitive to these changes and their social implications when coaching this age group. Some players may pick up skills quickly, where as others may struggle. However, it may be the case that this is simply the result of differences in maturation. In a year, the slower developer may surpass the player who developed earlier. For this reason we need to be patient and keep open minds about all players through these years. They are aware of their struggles more than anyone else as peer evaluation is omnipresent at these ages. When we see them struggling, it is important for us to help them and to keep the game fun.