



# MSYSA Grassroots Curriculum 2020





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## 1. Summary & Purpose

### The Foundation of Grassroots Coaching

While typically affiliated with younger age groups, grassroots soccer exists at every level. Whether that is a youth environment where players are experiencing organized soccer for the first time, or adults who are looking to learn more and get into the sport, grassroots soccer continues to be the bedrock of the sport.

At its core, the philosophy of U.S. Soccer's grassroots pathway initiative is Play-Practice-Play, a philosophy coaches learn about in the Introduction to Grassroots Coaching module. This approach will focus on the player experiencing and learning through play while also empowering the coach to support his or her player's learning and developmental needs.



- Inclusive- soccer played by all anywhere, anytime, any person
- Wide range of ability levels and experiences.
- Motivation for playing is about participation and a love for soccer.
- Provides continuous opportunities



## 2. Player Development Philosophy

*At the grassroots level, children learn and develop to their full potential through game-like experiences in an enjoyable environment that supports individual growth.*



### 3. Grassroots Values

**USA**

## U.S. SOCCER LICENSED COACHES

*CREATE A POSITIVE, SUPPORTIVE AND CHALLENGING LEARNING ENVIRONMENT*

<h3>ENJOYMENT</h3> <p>ALL PLAYERS:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• ENJOY THEMSELVES (ALSO THE LESS GIFTED)</li><li>• PLAY A LOT OF GAMES DURING PRACTICE THAT INCLUDE TOUCHES AND SCORING OPPORTUNITIES</li></ul>	<h3>DIGNITY &amp; RESPECT</h3> <p>ALL PLAYERS:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• ARE TREATED FAIRLY AND ENCOURAGED (NOT EXCLUDED) BY THE COACH</li><li>• LEARN RESPECT (THEMSELVES, OTHERS, AND LAWS OF THE GAME- FAIRPLAY)</li><li>• EVERY PLAYER PLAYS AT LEAST 50% OF THE TIME</li></ul>	<h3>SAFETY</h3> <p>ALL PLAYERS:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• HAVE SAFE LEARNING CONDITIONS THAT ARE FREE FROM PHYSICAL HARM, INTIMIDATION, HARASSMENT, AND BULLYING</li></ul>	<h3>DEVELOPMENT</h3> <p>ALL PLAYERS:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• ARE CHALLENGED TO MAKE OWN DECISIONS, TAKE INITIATIVE AND BE RESPONSIBLE</li><li>• EFFORTS ARE VALUED TO BUILD SELF-ESTEEM</li><li>• LEARN TO COLLABORATE AS TEAMMATES</li><li>• EXPERIENCE THE APPROPRIATE LEVEL OF CHALLENGE IN TRAINING AND COMPETITION</li></ul>
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**ALL PLAYERS CAN PLAY TO WIN BUT LEARN THROUGH LOSING**



## 4. Playing Style Statement

The Style of Play is a particular way in which a team and players play and perform based on principles influenced by culture, environment of a country, club, personality, coaches and players.



**Example (Reference to the US Soccer Grassroots Roadmaps).**

- **In the attack we will build up from our half to the opponents to create chances and score goals.**
- **We want to utilize quick transitions (from Attacking-Defending and Defending to Attacking)**
- **While defending, we will try to prevent the opponents build up in their own half to regain the ball closer to the attacking goal.**



## 5. Curriculum Attacking

Phase	Phase 1	Phase 2	Phase 3
	In Possession Own Half (Move the Ball Forward)	In Possession Opponents Half Creating Scoring Chances	Scoring Goals
<b>Technical or Tactical Themes</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Pass/Dribble to go Forward</li> <li>- Spreading Out to Create Openings</li> <li>- Movement to Create Passing Options</li> <li>- Support the Attack to go Forwards</li> <li>- Change the Point of Attack</li> <li>- Switch Positions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Pass/Dribble to go Forward</li> <li>- Create 2v1 and 1v1's to Break Defensive Lines</li> <li>- Support the Attack</li> <li>Change the Point of Attack</li> <li>- Change the Pace/Rhythm</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 2v1 &amp; 1v1's</li> <li>- Shooting</li> <li>- Scoring from Crosses</li> </ul>

## 6. Attacking Roadmap

ATTACKING				
WHERE	WHY/GOAL	HOW	WHAT/PLAYER ACTIONS	WHO/QUALITIES
Where is it happening on the field?	Why do players attack? What are the goals?	How are players going to accomplish the goals?	What can players do to achieve the How and the Why?	Who are these players? What qualities do they need to execute the actions?
Own half Build up	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Move the ball forward</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Find openings</li> <li>• Create openings</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Shoot</li> <li>• Pass or dribble forward</li> <li>• Spread out</li> <li>• Create passing options</li> <li>• Support the attack</li> <li>• Create a 2v1 or 1v1</li> <li>• Change the point of attack</li> <li>• Change the pace/rhythm</li> <li>• Switch positions</li> </ul>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Read and understand the game and make decisions</li> <li>2. Take initiative, be pro-active</li> <li>3. Demonstrate focus</li> <li>4. Execute with optimal technical abilities</li> <li>5. Execute with optimal physical abilities</li> <li>6. Take responsibility and accountability for their own development and performance</li> </ol>
Opponent's half Build up	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create Chances</li> </ul>			
Close to the goal Scoring	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Score goals</li> </ul>			



## 7. Curriculum Defending

Phase	Phase 4	Phase 5	Phase 6
	Out of Possession Opponents Half (Prevent Ball Moving Forwards)	Out of Possession Own Half (Prevent Scoring Chances)	Prevent Goals
Technical or Tactical Themes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Protect the Goal</li> <li>- 1v1 Defending (Steal The Ball)</li> <li>- Compactness (Make it Compact, Keep it Compact)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 1v1 Defending</li> <li>- Compacting as a team</li> <li>- Recovering</li> <li>- Defensive Principles (Pressure, Cover, Balance)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Outnumbering the Opponent</li> <li>- Shot Blocking</li> <li>- 1v1 Defending</li> <li>- Marking (Zone, Man to Man)</li> </ul>

## 8. Defensive Roadmap

DEFENDING				
WHERE	WHY/GOAL	HOW	WHAT/PLAYER ACTIONS	WHO/QUALITIES
Where is it happening on the field?	Why do players defend? What are the goals?	How are players going to accomplish the goals?	What can players do to achieve the How and the Why?	Who are these players? What qualities do they need to execute the actions?
Opponent's half Prevent the build up	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prevent the opponent from moving the ball forward</li> <li>• Regain the ball</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Close the openings (to the goal)</li> <li>• Keep the openings (to the goal) closed</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Protect the goal</li> <li>• Steal the ball</li> <li>• Make it compact</li> <li>• Keep it compact</li> <li>• Pressure, cover, balance</li> <li>• Outnumber the opponent</li> <li>• Stay involved</li> <li>• Mark the player/mark the area</li> </ul>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Read and understand the game and make decisions</li> <li>2. Take initiative, be pro-active</li> <li>3. Demonstrate focus</li> <li>4. Execute with optimal technical abilities</li> <li>5. Execute with optimal physical abilities</li> <li>6. Take responsibility and accountability for their own development and performance</li> </ol>
Own half Prevent the build up	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prevent the opponent from moving the ball forward</li> <li>• Regain the ball</li> </ul>			
Close to the goal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prevent scoring goals</li> <li>• Deny chances</li> </ul>			





## 9. Key Qualities

### 1. READ AND UNDERSTAND THE GAME AND MAKE DECISIONS

- applies knowledge of the cues
- reads and analyzes situations regarding attacking/defending/transition
- understands where and when to move themselves and the ball
- aligns own actions with other players and positions

### 2. TAKE INITIATIVE, BE PROACTIVE

- creates opportunities instead of reacting
- confronts situations
- challenges opponents

### 3. DEMONSTRATE FOCUS

- plays to win
- demonstrates bravery
- deals with adversity
- remains calm and composed

### 4. EXECUTE WITH OPTIMAL TECHNICAL ABILITIES

- shows comfort with the ball
- is technically proficient to be effective
- is proficient in 1v1 situations to create or to regain the ball

### 5. EXECUTE WITH OPTIMAL PHYSICAL ABILITIES

- demonstrates physical awareness (what their bodies can do)
- is coordinated in their movement

### 6. TAKE RESPONSIBILITY AND ACCOUNTABILITY FOR OWN DEVELOPMENT AND PERFORMANCE

- is involved and engaged throughout every game/training session
- delivers on agreements and promises
- is adaptable and flexible in dealing with (unexpected) challenges and problems
- articulates own learning needs
- evaluates and reflects on own performance



## 10. “Why” Play Practice Play

When children arrive at practice they have little desire to stand in lines, run laps, perform drills, or be lectured, they simply want to have fun, connect with their teammates, and learn through engaging and enjoyable activities. Therefore, it is important for coaches to keep these factors in mind when creating and designing their practice environments. As for practice design, the debate about the optimal quantity, quality, type, sequencing and combination of learning activities during Zone 1 development (ages between of 6-12), is ongoing within the athlete development and performance literature.<sup>1-7</sup>

While there is no single best approach to practice design,<sup>5</sup> athlete development research indicates that participation in different types of learning activities (i.e., child-led or adult-led, structured or unstructured) such as ‘informal play’<sup>8</sup>, ‘deliberate play’<sup>1,2,9-11</sup> or more structured activities such ‘deliberate practice’<sup>12</sup> are important influences in the athlete development process.<sup>5</sup> Recent studies, specific to soccer, indicate that high levels of engagement in low structured informal play or soccer specific deliberate play activities are an important component in the athlete development process and practice pathway of high-level performers.<sup>4,8,13-14</sup>

### PLAYERS LEARN:

<b>what they like</b>	intrinsic motivation as the driver for learning
<b>what they need</b>	transfer, no gap between the training and the game
<b>to read, analyze and decide</b>	how players perceive and explain a situation is the driver for their behavior
<b>to be creative</b>	looking for solutions
<b>to reflect</b>	thinking about experiences and how to use experiences
<b>to learn</b>	developing and improving learning habits
<b>to be independent critical thinkers</b>	independent/social and responsible/accountable adults



## 11. Training Sessions

At the Grassroots level, the U.S. Soccer Coach Education Department is committed to an evidenced-based approach to coaching education and player development. Evidence-Based Coaching (EBC) focuses on integrating three key components; 1. The best available research on player development, 2. Coaching expertise and, 3. An appreciation of the needs and values of the learner (i.e. player). With that, in an attempt to create a developmentally appropriate practice environment, U.S. Soccer has adopted a three stage practice plan model (i.e., 'Play-Practice-Play'). This approach aligns with the best available research on athlete development pathways and is designed with the intent of maximizing player enjoyment, intrinsic motivation, and skill development.

### THE 3 PHASE TRAINING SESSION: PLAY-PRACTICE-PLAY MODEL (ZONE 1 DEVELOPMENT)

TRAINING PHASE	PHASE 1: FIRST PLAY	PHASE 2: PRACTICE	PHASE 3: SECOND PLAY
<b>THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Learning by playing</li> <li>• Deliberate play (Cote)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Learning and quality improvement through game like activities</li> <li>• Play-Practice activities (Lauder)</li> <li>• Teaching Games for Understanding (Griffin &amp; Butler)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Contextual learning by playing the game</li> <li>• Let them play (Fonseca, Tamarit)</li> </ul>
<b>PURPOSE</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A fun introduction to practice</li> <li>• Games orientate players to the training goal (2v2, 3v3, 4v4)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Activities/game-situations focuses players on the training goal</li> <li>• Conscious learning</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Training goal in the game format (based on maximum roster size)</li> <li>• Opportunity to implement their learning</li> </ul>
<b>ACTIVITY CHARACTERISTICS</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fun, inclusive, implicit learning, creativity</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fun, actively involved, repetitions, challenging</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fun, even numbers, position rotations, rules</li> </ul>
<b>TEACHING ACTIONS</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Monitoring ('the game teaches')</li> <li>• Five elements (1-5)</li> <li>• Key words</li> <li>• Guided questions</li> <li>• Positive reinforcement</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Active teaching</li> <li>• Five elements (1-5)</li> <li>• Key words</li> <li>• Guided questions</li> <li>• Positive reinforcement</li> <li>• Demonstration</li> <li>• Feedback</li> <li>• Learning circle</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Observation</li> <li>• Checking for understanding</li> <li>• Five elements (1-5)</li> <li>• Key words</li> <li>• Guided questions</li> <li>• Positive reinforcement</li> <li>• Feedback</li> </ul>



## Stage 1. PLAY 1 “Deliberate Play”

When players arrive at practice it is important that coaches create an environment that is engaging and enjoyable. One way to engage players is through low structured small sided games (i.e., 2v2, 3v3, 4v4) also referred to as ‘deliberate play’ in the athlete development literature.<sup>2,16</sup> ‘Deliberate play’ refers to smaller, informal game like representations (i.e. small-sided games) of the official game format and are designed primarily for the purpose of enjoyment<sup>1</sup>. These ‘deliberate play’ games are ideally governed by the players while being loosely monitored by the coach, and focus on promoting enjoyment of competing<sup>19</sup> rather than the outcome (i.e. winning).<sup>1</sup> The key point, for Grassroots coaches, is that ‘deliberate play’ promotes enjoyment, inclusion and development. When players are more engaged, feel included and enjoy themselves it will likely increase motivation to continue playing. This is particularly important during the adolescent years where dropout is higher.<sup>13</sup> When coaches design practices that promote opportunities to engage in ‘deliberate play’, it should be viewed as intentionally creating a fun and player-centered environment that contextualizes the development of technique and tactical awareness. When engaged in ‘deliberate play’ the game/environment is the primary teacher and the coach serves as a facilitator who, when necessary, guides players to find solutions as opposed to providing the answers. In this stage of the practice, the coach’s goal is to help create the environment that orientates the players to the practice objective via ‘deliberate play’. While there are clear benefits to having a coach instruct and provide feedback on performance, we must also appreciate that in the teaching-learning process we don’t always have to instruct in order for learning and development to occur.

Benefits of ‘Deliberate Play’ A growing body of athlete development literature suggests that engagement in ‘deliberate play’ is important and has a number of positive implications for the physical, social, cognitive, and emotional development of children. <sup>1, 2, 16-18, 20</sup> More specifically, research investigating the practice pathway of elite soccer players indicates that high levels of engagement in less structured soccer specific ‘deliberate play’ and practice activities are an important component for attaining high-level performance.<sup>3,4,8,13,14</sup> The benefits of ‘deliberate play’ include:

- Increases enjoyment and intrinsic motivation
- Promotes motor and cognitive development
- Promotes game awareness
- Promotes inclusion
- Provides players with frequent ball contact
- Promotes social interaction and problem solving skills
- Promotes game-like decision making (i.e., tactical cues)
- Contextualizes technical development (i.e., skill = tactical application of technique)



## Stage 2. Practice Activities

During the second stage, known as 'practice', the goal is to create an environment that develops the player in relation to the practice objective and any related team tactical principles and key qualities of the player. While 'deliberate play' is a positive introduction to the practice and has an important role in practice design, it can only facilitate the learning process to a point.<sup>5</sup> In order to facilitate learning further players must be engaged in different forms of learning activities such as 'play-practice' activities 21-22, 'Teaching Games for Understanding' (TGFU) 23 or elements of 'deliberate practice'.<sup>12</sup> Research shows that the practice pathway to maximizing development is dynamic, the acquisition of skill is non-linear<sup>7</sup> and that there is flexibility in the types of training activities an athlete engages in to achieve optimal performance.<sup>5</sup> The key is to create a practice environment that integrates a balance of developmentally appropriate activities that find the right challenge point for the learner.<sup>24</sup> 'Play-practice' activities refer to activities that are designed, and guided, by coaches to improve aspects of performance (i.e., technical skills, team tactical principles or key qualities) while emphasizing fun and enjoyment at the same time. 21-22 The TFGU model, a games-centered teaching pedagogy, places emphasis on developing tactical awareness and decision making within the framework of modified games 23,25 and facilitates the learners understanding of when, where, and how to apply their technique in a game context. 25 Deliberate practice is more highly structured and primarily focused on the goal of improving performance as opposed to just the inherent enjoyment of participating.

One of the key qualities of a coach is the ability to design practices that incorporate developmentally appropriate learning activities that are enjoyable, educational, game-like, and challenging. The characteristics of developmentally appropriate practice activities include:

- Frequent technical repetitions - improves ball mastery
- Activities are player-centered
- Activities are game-like in nature (i.e. problem-solving, decision making)
- Provide opportunities for instructional feedback to facilitate learning and development

It is important to reiterate that while some activities can be more structured, and coached, they don't have to be any less enjoyable. The goal of grassroots coaches is to find a way to create an engaging environment that incorporates activities that are educational, enjoyable and game-like.



## Stage 3. The Game “Let them Play”

During the final stage of every practice the players should be provided with the opportunity and freedom to play, without interruption, in a format (i.e., 5v5, 7v7, 9v9) that replicates the game. This is the time for players to express themselves, without being micro-managed, and work through the process of applying their technical and tactical skills within a game context. At this stage of the practice the coach is checking to see if the player is able to transfer the skills learned in practice into the game environment. The point at which the player is unable to find a solution, or make the necessary corrections, is an opportunity for the coach to engage, at appropriate teachable moments, in the learning process.

### SUMMARY

**In closing, the key ingredients of an effective grassroots practice environment is one that has a careful balance between 'deliberate play', a variety of learning activities, and regular game opportunities. These three components, when combined, create an effective practice environment that maximizes player enjoyment and development.**



**7v7 U.S. Soccer Play-Practice-Play Training Session**

**GOAL:** Improve building-up in opponent's half in order to create chances

**PLAYER ACTIONS:** Pass/dribble, Spread out, 2v1/1v1

**KEY QUALITIES:** Read game/make decisions, Initiative, Optimal technical

**AGE:** U9-U10 / 7v7 / 12 players

**MOMENT:** Attacking

**DURATION:** 90 min



**1ST PLAY PHASE: Intentional Free Play**

**OBJECTIVE:** To pass or dribble forward and score goals.

**ORGANIZATION:** Mark out two 32 x 20 yard fields, each with two mini goals. Teams play 3 v 3. Free play, kick-ins. Play for 30 minutes with two to three breaks.

**KEY WORDS:** Opening, take opponents on, head up, go!

**GUIDED QUESTIONS:** 1) How do you find an opening? 2) What should you do if you see an opening?

**ANSWERS:** 1) Look at the opponent's position. 2) Pass or dribble through it.

**NOTES:** First break: Coach asks questions, players continue playing to discover answers. Second break: Players share answers with coach and each other. Refer to the Training Session Manual.



**PRACTICE (Core Activity): 3 v 2**

**OBJECTIVE:** To create 1 v 1s and 2 v 1s and pass or dribble forward.

**ORGANIZATION:** Teams play 3 v 2 + GK on a 24 x 24 yard field with a standard goal and two small goals. Blue (attacking team) dribbles or passes in. Red starts from the top of the box and tries to win the ball and score on the small goals. All players (including the keeper) rotate every 2-3 minutes. Play for 30 minutes with two to three breaks.

**KEY WORDS:** Opening, take opponents on, head up, pass/dribble, goal

**GUIDED QUESTIONS:** 1) How do you find an opening? 2) What should you do if you see an opening? 3) How do you create an opening?

**ANSWERS:** 1) Look at the opponent's position. 2) Pass or dribble through it. 3) Make the opponent move.

**NOTES:** Start with the Core Activity after the first Play Phase. If it's too difficult, switch to the Less Challenging Activity. If it's too easy, switch to the More Challenging Activity. Spend a total of 30 minutes in the Practice Phase. Refer to the Training Session Manual.



**PRACTICE (Less Challenging): 2 v 1**

**OBJECTIVE:** To create 1 v 1s and 2 v 1s and pass or dribble forward.

**ORGANIZATION:** Same as Core Activity, except teams play 2 v 1 + GK. All players (including the keeper) rotate every 2-3 minutes. If space is available, set-up two activities.

**KEY WORDS:** Opening, take opponents on, head up, pass/dribble, goal

**GUIDED QUESTIONS:** 1) How do you find an opening? 2) What should you do if you see an opening? 3) How do you create an opening?

**ANSWERS:** 1) Look at the opponent's position. 2) Pass or dribble through it. 3) Make the opponent move.

**NOTES:** Start with the Core Activity and decide whether the level of challenge is appropriate for the players. Switch to this Less Challenging Activity if the Core Activity is too difficult. Spend a total of 30 minutes in the Practice Phase. Refer to the Training Session Manual.

## 7v7 U.S. Soccer Play-Practice-Play Training Session

GOAL: Improve building-up in opponent's half in order to create chances

PLAYER ACTIONS: Pass/dribble, Spread out, 2v1/1v1

KEY QUALITIES: Read game/make decisions, Initiative, Optimal technical

AGE: U9-U10 / 7v7 / 12 players

MOMENT: Attacking

DURATION: 90 min



### PRACTICE (More Challenging): 4 v 3

OBJECTIVE: To create 1 v 1s and 2 v 1s and pass or dribble forward.

ORGANIZATION: Same as Core Activity, except teams play 4 v 3 + GK on half of a standard 7v7 field. All players (including the keeper) rotate every 2-3 minutes.

KEY WORDS: Opening, take opponents on, head up, pass/dribble, goal

GUIDED QUESTIONS: 1) How do you find an opening? 2) What should you do if you see an opening? 3) How do you create an opening?

ANSWERS: 1) Look at the opponent's position. 2) Pass or dribble through it. 3) Make the opponent move.

NOTES: Start with the Core Activity and decide whether the level of challenge is appropriate for the players. Switch to this More Challenging Activity if the Core Activity is too easy. Spend a total of 30 minutes in the Practice Phase. Refer to the Training Session Manual.



### 2ND PLAY PHASE: The Game

OBJECTIVE: To move the ball forward, create chances and score goals.

ORGANIZATION: Mark out a regular 7 v 7 field with build-out lines. Divide players into two teams of six. Each team plays a 1-2-3 formation. Play for 30 minutes including one "halftime" (5 min.) using the Laws of the Game (LOTG) and according to the standards of play found in the U.S. Soccer Player Development Initiatives (PDIs).

KEY WORDS: Opening, take opponents on, head up, pass/dribble, goal

GUIDED QUESTIONS: 1) How do you find an opening? 2) What should you do if you see an opening? 3) How do you create an opening?

ANSWERS: 1) Look at the opponent's position. 2) Pass or dribble through it. 3) Make the opponent move.

NOTES:

### Five Elements of a Training Activity

1. **Organized:** Is the activity organized in the right way?
2. **Game-like:** Is the activity game-like?
3. **Repetition:** Is there repetition, when looking at the overall goal of the session?
4. **Challenging:** Are the players being challenged? (Is there the right balance between being successful and unsuccessful?)
5. **Coaching:** Is there effective coaching, based on the age and level of the player?

### Training Session Self-Reflection Questions

1. How did you do in achieving the goals of the training session?
2. What did you do well?
3. What could you do better?





## 12. Coaches Toolkit

WHAT - TEACHING ACTIONS	PURPOSE OF THE ACTION	WHEN - THE MOMENT OF APPLICATION
<b>CHECK - ADAPT</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Observe and check the created situation on the field, adapt if necessary based on the Five Elements of a Training Activity</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ongoing</li> <li>In the flow (sideline coaching)</li> <li>Planned stoppage (break)</li> <li>Natural stoppage (ball out of bounds)</li> <li>In the situation (freeze)</li> </ul> <p>The application of coaching actions can be a single action or combined actions during different moments.</p> <p>Examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>In the situation (freeze): combination of demonstration, Q&amp;A and feedback</li> <li>Planned stoppage (break): Q&amp;A and encourage players to focus them</li> </ul>
<b>GIVE POSITIVE REINFORCEMENT</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reinforce effective actions in order to use it again in similar situations</li> <li>Motivate players</li> </ul>	
<b>USE OF KEY WORDS</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Encourage and support players to focus on cues and/or desired behavior</li> </ul>	
<b>ASK QUESTIONS</b> (and collect answers)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Use guided questions to force players to think about cues and/or desired behavior</li> <li>Check for understanding</li> <li>Reflect</li> </ul>	
<b>DEMONSTRATE</b> (player and/or coach)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Model desired behavior</li> <li>Visualize the situation</li> <li>Check for understanding</li> </ul>	
<b>GIVE FEEDBACK</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Collect information on players' behavior related to the objective of the activity</li> </ul>	
<b>COMMAND</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Tell players what to do</li> </ul>	
<b>APPLY THE LEARNING CIRCLE</b> (as a concept)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Use a combination of coaching observation and player reflection to get players thinking about and/or modeling the desired behavior and applying their newly learned abilities</li> </ul>	





## 13. Development Framework

### Framework – A Basic Structure Underlying a System

#### U.S. SOCCER GRASSROOTS PLAYER DEVELOPMENT PHILOSOPHY

At the grassroots level, children learn and develop to their full potential through game-like experiences in an enjoyable environment that supports individual growth.

#### U.S. SOCCER COACHING EDUCATION PHILOSOPHY

**Reality Based:** The game is what drives changes in behavior, reflection and decision making for the player/the team and the coach

**Holistic Approach:** Input and consideration for all interconnected aspects of the game, the athlete and the desired outcome

**Experiential Learning:** The evaluation, analysis and reflection of experiences to develop competencies and improve behavior

#### KEY QUALITIES OF A U.S. SOCCER PLAYER

1. Read and understand the game and make decisions
2. Take initiative, be pro-active
3. Demonstrate focus
4. Execute with optimal technical abilities
5. Execute with optimal physical abilities
6. Take responsibility and accountability for their own development and performance

The U.S. Soccer Grassroots Player Development Framework is a simplified overview of the development pathway of U6 to U13+ grassroots players related to the four game models and player ages, based on goals, needs, key qualities, and player/coach behavior.

We define player development as a series of progressive changes leading to a higher level of differentiation and functioning. Two characteristics of development are change and progress. Differentiation is the developmental process when the qualities of a player are getting more advanced and refined. The combination of growth, maturation and learning lead to a higher level of functioning. When maturing, it is about physical growth. Learning is the process by which experience results in a change in behavior. Children of different ages will process and reason information in different ways.

The stages of player development see development as a regular succession of stages, in a process of continuous progress. This development is a combination of cognitive, psychosocial and motor development.

- Cognitive development is the development of intelligence, conscious thought, and problem-solving ability.
- Motor development refers to the development of a child's bones, muscles and ability to move around and manipulate his or her environment.
- Psychosocial development is the development of the personality, including the acquisition of social attitudes and skills.

There will be a holistic approach when looking at these different aspects of development. This means, input and consideration for all interconnected aspects of the game, the player and the desired outcome.



# U.S. SOCCER GRASSROOTS PLAYER DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK



GAME MODEL: 4v4

AGES: 6 - 8

## 4v4

	DEVELOPMENTAL GOALS	DEVELOPMENTAL NEEDS	KEY QUALITIES	ATTACKING PLAYER ACTIONS	DEFENDING PLAYER ACTIONS	PLAYER BEHAVIORS	COACH BEHAVIORS
AGE 6	<p><b>"The ball is playing with me... I am playing with the ball."</b></p> <p>Learning the fundamentals of the game in game-like situations. Understanding the purpose and structure of the game, direction of play, and basic rules.</p>	<p>Activity based games that emphasize exploration and experimentation.</p> <p>Ball experiences in game-like situations.</p> <p>Exploring physical abilities.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reads and analyzes situations regarding the structure of soccer attacking/defending/transition</li> <li>Takes initiative-creates opportunities instead of reacting</li> <li>Wants to score</li> <li>Shows comfort with the ball</li> <li>Is involved and engaged throughout every game/training session</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Shoot</li> <li>Pass or dribble forward</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Protect the goal</li> <li>Steal the ball</li> </ul>	<p>Small, incidental things are important</p> <p>Always in motion</p>	<p>Appreciate the things they take seriously, even if you don't</p> <p>Use routines to manage them during practice and games</p>
AGES 7 - 8	<p><b>"Playing with my friends."</b></p> <p>Learning the basic understanding of attacking, defending, and transition by playing together..</p>	<p>Activities focused on the goals of attacking and defending and how to accomplish them</p> <p>Ball experiences in game-like situations with attention for the key qualities of a player</p> <p>Experiences of attacking and defending together (reading &amp; decision making)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Applies (basic) knowledge of the cues</li> <li>Understands where and when to move themselves and the ball</li> <li>Confronts situations</li> <li>Demonstrates bravery</li> <li>Delivers on agreements and promises</li> <li>Evaluates and reflects on their own performance</li> <li><i>Plus all key qualities above</i></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Spread out</li> <li>Create passing options</li> <li>Support the attack</li> <li><i>Plus all player actions above</i></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Make it compact</li> <li>Keep it compact</li> <li><i>Plus all player actions above</i></li> </ul>	<p>Short attention span</p> <p>Live in the moment</p> <p>Focus is on self</p>	<p>Exercises are short and to the point, reminders are necessary</p> <p>Talk about what happens, not what happened</p> <p>Accept their behavior and praise when they share</p>

**A>D** Defend as quickly as possible (transition is always a part of attacking and defending but is not a focus for the Grassroots Coach).

**D>A** Attack as quickly as possible (transition is always a part of attacking and defending but is not a focus for the Grassroots Coach).



# U.S. SOCCER GRASSROOTS PLAYER DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK



**GAME MODEL:** 7v7

**AGES:** 9 - 10

## 7v7

DEVELOPMENTAL GOALS	DEVELOPMENTAL NEEDS	KEY QUALITIES	ATTACKING PLAYER ACTIONS	DEFENDING PLAYER ACTIONS	PLAYER BEHAVIORS	COACH BEHAVIORS
<p><b>"Playing as team."</b></p> <p>Learning the basic understanding of attacking, defending, and transition by playing as a 7v7 team.</p>	<p>Developing relationships with the other players, how decisions and movement affect others (teammates and opponents)</p> <p>Experiences in game-like situations for key qualities related to attacking and defending</p> <p>Experiences of attacking and defending as a team</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Aligns own actions with the other players, positions</li> <li>Challenges opponents</li> <li>Deals with adversity</li> <li>Is proficient in 1v1 situations to create or to steal/regain the ball</li> <li>Plus all key qualities of a 4v4 player</li> </ul>	<p><b>U6</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Shoot</li> <li>Pass or dribble forward</li> </ul> <p><b>U7/U8</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Spread out</li> <li>Create passing options</li> <li>Support the attack</li> </ul> <p><b>U9/U10</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Create a 2v1 or 1v1</li> <li>Change the point of attack</li> </ul>	<p><b>U6</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Protect the goal</li> <li>Steal the ball</li> </ul> <p><b>U7/U8</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Make it compact</li> <li>Keep it compact</li> </ul> <p><b>U9/U10</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Pressure, cover, balance</li> <li>Outnumber the opponent</li> </ul>	<p>Participate enthusiastically in competitive activities</p> <p>Practice repeatedly to get better</p> <p>Take losing hard, in practice and games</p> <p>Want to know "why"</p> <p>Need lots of positive reinforcement</p>	<p>Encourage them to try to win, but always be fair</p> <p>Recognize their effort, give them things to practice on at home</p> <p>Focus on how they play and improve, not the results</p> <p>Guide them toward finding the answers themselves</p> <p>Give plenty of praise</p>

### Key Qualities of a 4v4 player

- Reads and analyzes situations regarding the structure of soccer attacking/defending/transition
- Takes initiative-creates opportunities instead of reacting
- Wants to score
- Shows comfort with the ball
- Is involved and engaged throughout every game/ training session
- Applies (basic) knowledge of the cues
- Understands where and when to move themselves and the ball
- Confronts situations
- Demonstrates bravery
- Delivers on agreements and promises
- Evaluates and reflects on their own performance

### A>D

Defend as quickly as possible (transition is always a part of attacking and defending but is not a focus for the Grassroots Coach).

### D>A

Attack as quickly as possible (transition is always a part of attacking and defending but is not a focus for the Grassroots Coach).



# U.S. SOCCER GRASSROOTS PLAYER DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK



GAME MODEL: 9v9

AGES: 11 - 12

## 9v9

DEVELOPMENTAL GOALS	DEVELOPMENTAL NEEDS	KEY QUALITIES	ATTACKING PLAYER ACTIONS	DEFENDING PLAYER ACTIONS	PLAYER BEHAVIORS	COACH BEHAVIORS
<p><b>"Playing my role and position for the team."</b></p> <p>Learning the fundamentals given his/ her role, position, and tasks in the 9v9 team.</p>	<p>Gaining fundamental understanding of the meaning of role, position and task in a team</p> <p>Experiences in game-like situations for the task specific Key Qualities of attacking and defending</p> <p>Experiences of position specific task execution during defending and attacking</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Remains calm and composed</li> <li>Is technically proficient to be effective</li> <li>Is coordinated in their movement</li> <li>Is adaptable and flexible in dealing with (unexpected) challenges and problems</li> <li>Articulates their own learning needs</li> <li>Plus all key qualities of a 4v4 and 7v7 player</li> </ul>	<p><b>U6</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Shoot</li> <li>Pass or dribble forward</li> </ul> <p><b>U7/U8</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Spread out</li> <li>Create passing options</li> <li>Support the attack</li> </ul> <p><b>U9/U10</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Create a 2v1 or 1v1</li> <li>Change the point of attack</li> </ul> <p><b>U11/U12</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>Change the pace/ rhythm</i></li> <li><i>Switch positions</i></li> </ul>	<p><b>U6</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Protect the goal</li> <li>Steal the ball</li> </ul> <p><b>U7/U8</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Make it compact</li> <li>Keep it compact</li> </ul> <p><b>U9/U10</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Pressure, cover, balance</li> <li>Outnumber the opponent</li> </ul> <p><b>U11/U12</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>Stay involved</i></li> <li><i>Mark the player/ mark the area</i></li> </ul>	<p>Ready and eager to learn</p> <p>Will try more complex tasks</p> <p>Notice indifferences and unfair treatment</p> <p>Players within &amp; between genders develop at different rates</p> <p>Like to organize themselves without the coach</p>	<p>Come to training prepared with ideas to guide your players</p> <p>Encourage players to be creative and try new things</p> <p>Be consistent in what you say and how you treat individuals/ the team</p> <p>Organize groups to guarantee fun and challenge for every player</p> <p>Support their being independent and self-responsible</p>

### Key Qualities of a 4v4 player

- Reads and analyzes situations regarding the structure of soccer attacking/ defending/transition
- Takes initiative-creates opportunities instead of reacting
- Wants to score
- Shows comfort with the ball
- Is involved and engaged throughout every game/ training session
- Applies (basic) knowledge of the cues
- Understands where and when to move themselves and the ball
- Confronts situations
- Demonstrates bravery
- Delivers on agreements and promises
- Evaluates and reflects on their own performance

### Key Qualities of a 7v7 player

- Aligns own actions with the other players, positions
- Challenges opponents
- Deals with adversity
- Is proficient in 1v1 situations to create or to steal/regain the ball
- Plus all key qualities of a 4v4 player

### A>D

Defend as quickly as possible (transition is always a part of attacking and defending but is not a focus for the Grassroots Coach).

### D>A

Attack as quickly as possible (transition is always a part of attacking and defending but is not a focus for the Grassroots Coach).



# U.S. SOCCER GRASSROOTS PLAYER DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK



GAME MODEL: 11v11

AGES: 13+

## 11v11

DEVELOPMENTAL GOALS	DEVELOPMENTAL NEEDS	KEY QUALITIES	ATTACKING PLAYER ACTIONS	DEFENDING PLAYER ACTIONS	PLAYER BEHAVIORS	COACH BEHAVIORS
<p><b>“Being the best player that I can be for my role and position in the team.”</b></p> <p>Learning the alignment of the roles, positions, and designated tasks in the 11v11 team.</p>	<p>Gaining understanding of the meaning of role, position and designated task in a team</p> <p>Experiences of the alignment of position specific task execution during defending and attacking</p>	<p><b>All key qualities at U13+</b></p> <p><b>see below</b></p>	<p><b>All Player Actions</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Shoot</li> <li>• Pass or dribble forward</li> <li>• Spread out</li> <li>• Create passing options</li> <li>• Support the attack</li> <li>• Create a 2v1 or 1v1</li> <li>• Change the point of attack</li> <li>• Change the pace/rhythm</li> <li>• Switch positions</li> </ul>	<p><b>All Player Actions</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Protect the goal</li> <li>• Steal the ball</li> <li>• Make it compact</li> <li>• Keep it compact</li> <li>• Pressure, cover, balance</li> <li>• Outnumber the opponent</li> <li>• Stay involved</li> <li>• Mark the player/mark the area</li> </ul>	<p>Engage in problem solving activities</p> <p>Challenge ideas</p> <p>Demonstrate mood shifts</p> <p>Differences between genders</p> <p>Do not always play fairly</p>	<p>Use guided questions to support their thinking/decision making</p> <p>Listen first and consider their perspective</p> <p>Be patient and consistent in your treatment</p> <p>Give each player individual attention and care</p> <p>Encourage self-regulation, e.g. refereeing own games at training</p>

### A>D

Defend as quickly as possible (transition is always a part of attacking and defending but is not a focus for the Grassroots Coach).

### D>A

Attack as quickly as possible (transition is always a part of attacking and defending but is not a focus for the Grassroots Coach).

### KEY QUALITIES BY AGE GROUP

#### U6

- Reads and analyzes situations regarding the structure of soccer attacking/defending/transition
- Takes initiative-creates opportunities instead of reacting
- Wants to score
- Shows comfort with the ball
- Is involved and engaged throughout every game/ training session

#### U7/U8

- Applies (basic) knowledge of the cues
- Understands where and when to move themselves and the ball
- Confronts situations
- Demonstrates bravery
- Delivers on agreements and promises
- Evaluates and reflects on their own performance

#### U9/U10

- Aligns own actions with the other players, positions
- Challenges opponents
- Deals with adversity
- Is proficient in 1v1 situations to create or to steal/regain the ball
- Plus all key qualities of a 4v4 player

#### U11/U12

- Remains calm and composed
- Is technically proficient to be effective
- Is coordinated in their movement
- Is adaptable and flexible in dealing with (unexpected) challenges and problems
- Articulates their own learning needs
- Plus all key qualities of a 4v4 and 7v7 player



## 14. Formations

We need a systematic and simple progression from stage to stage

-When we make choices, the ultimate focus is to build to 11v11

