

Coaching Techniques

Matthew Robinson



Understanding the players

Players across all U-6, U-8 and U-10 age groups require a slow build up into the more advanced side of the game. A misconception surrounding these players is that they already have a strong basis of knowledge on the game and they can participate in higher level drills. As a coach, you may have 1 or 2 players that have this skill acquired already but the general census of the group will have not. A key word for these age groups is **Repetition**. Repeating fundamentals to the players will significantly increase their understanding of the game and allow coaches to begin advancing the material.

Mindset of younger players

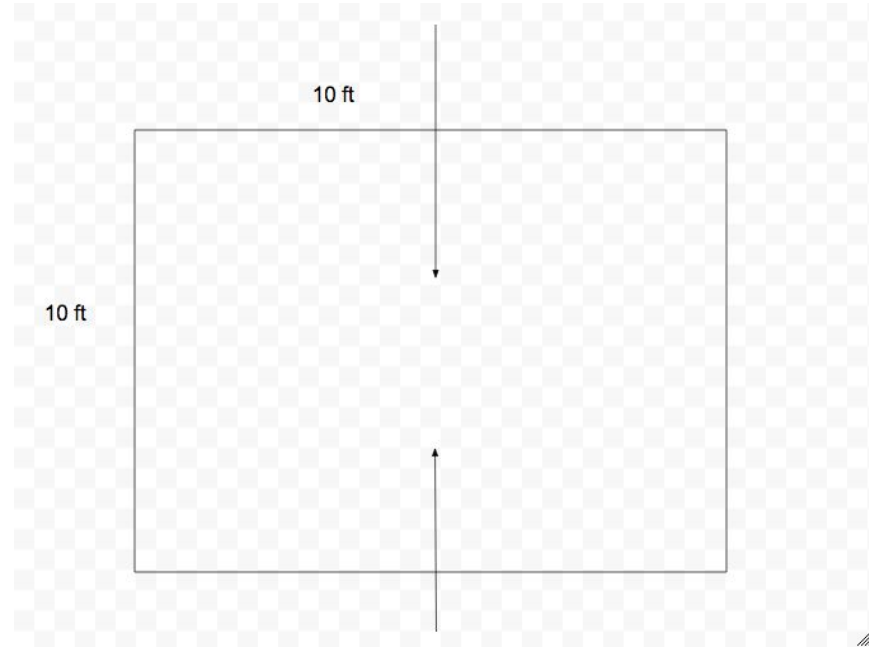
Players in these younger age groups have a very short attention span and do not like having things explained for a big chunk of time. They also love success, which is where repetition comes back into play. At this age, self esteem can make or break your players. Giving them multiple ways to achieve success and applauding them in drills each time will lead to more confidence on the field. As a coach, mixing feedback with compliments will allow players to feel positive about what they are doing correctly but they will also take in account your feedback.

Practice design

When designing a practice, keep in mind that the players need the drills to be engaging and different, not just simply passing and dribbling, but doing so with an end result or goal. Engaging the players in a variety of different activities to keep them moving, thinking and energized will allow for better practices, and better product in the games. At this age, for the majority of the practice every player should have a ball at their feet, or should be working to get a ball back. Having a ball in use at all times will keep the players aware of what is going on in the practice and give them something to constantly focus on.

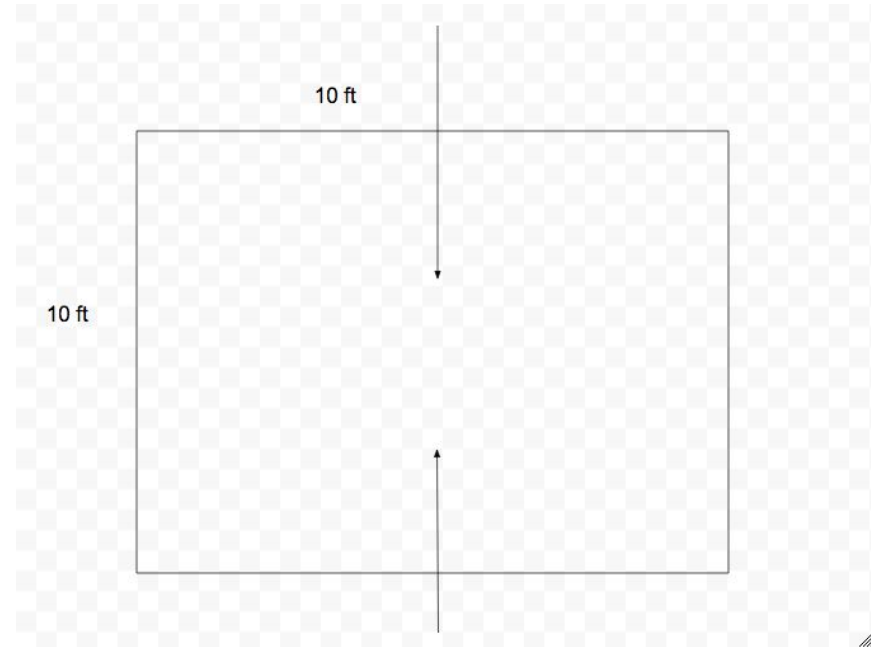
Practice drills(Warmup)

A good warm-up could be tag or “tail tag” where the players put a pinny tucked into their shorts and attempt to pull other players out. Drills like this will begin to make the kids think tactically, but without them having to just dribble. After a few rounds, add in soccer balls and have the players dribble the ball and attempt to kick each others out of the grid. In their minds, they are still playing tag but you have now incorporated more soccer related skills.(Completed in a large circle)



Practice drills(Dribbling)

A great way to form foundational skill is 1v1 drills, where players learn basic pullbacks, solerolls and turns. In a 10ftx10ft grid have two players dribble towards each other(each with a ball for now). Give them a direction to turn and have them attempt a skill while doing it. Even if the player does not complete a skill, give them positive feedback as they did complete the drill. Doing this will eventually lead to skills being used.

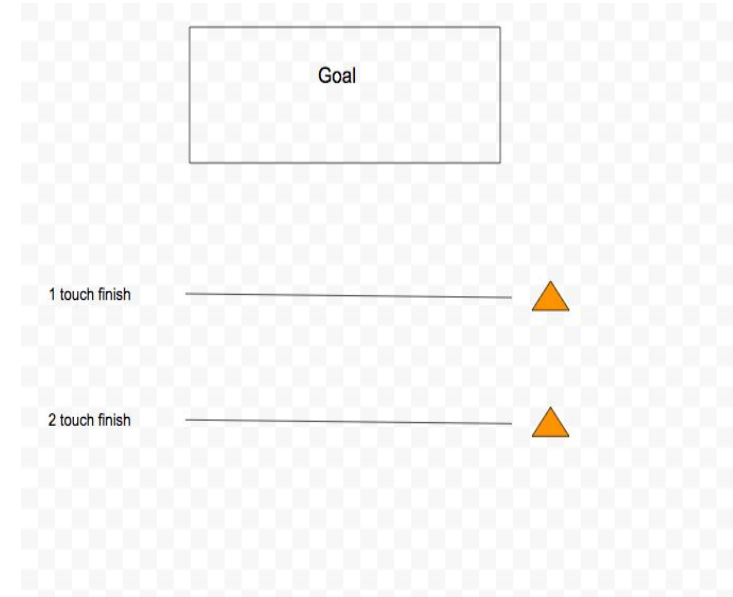


Practice drills(Passing/Control)

One great way to teach passing and controlling the ball is getting the team in a big circle, with one ball. Have the kids slowly practice controlling the ball and passing it by calling another teammates name, and passing the ball to him/her. Continue this for roughly 10-15 minutes, to reinforce the technique. After this begin to show moving and passing, to closer resemble a game like situation. This can be done in pairs, or groups of 3-5

Practice drills(Shooting)

A good drill for shooting is the “2 touch 1 touch” drill, where players have a ball rolled to them and they take a touch(control the ball) and then shoot. After this, another ball is rolled out and the player must shoot the ball first time. A good way to incorporate multiple skills would be to have the other players passing the ball out, instead of you rolling them. For shooting drills, you want to have as many shots as possible being taken, ensuring that the players are not only practicing the right technique but repeating it.



Key reminders

1. Toe-Knee-Chest-Nut. When pronounced it sounds like Tony Chestnut, a fun name for the kids to remember. When in reality, it is a way to remember the kicking technique. Toe- where is the toe placed in relation to the ball. Knee- the knee should be looking down at the ball. Chest- always keep your chest above the ball. Nut- same as your chest be looking down and directly over the ball.
2. Always reinforce positive energy- positive mindset from the coach results in positive results for the players
3. Winning is NOT everything- as a coach the main priority is the development of the players and making sure they are having fun

Contact information

Email: mtrobinson1023@gmail.com

Phone: 704-975-8316