

Methods of Coaching

2.0 Methodology

U.S. Soccer recognizes that there are many ways to teach the game of soccer. For this reason, the methodology in the U.S. Soccer coaching curriculum offers a broad based methodology that ranges from a directed to a more guided approach. Regardless of the specific coaching style or methodology, we believe there are basic concepts and characteristics that are foundational to effective teaching of the game. When developing and executing appropriate and effective training sessions, it is helpful to consider the following concepts.

- Context: How does this technique or decision fit into the match model and how are they affected by the particular situation occurring in the game?
- Contrast: How is this technique or decision directly opposed to another movement or decision that occurs in soccer?
- Recurring themes: How to identify, recognize and act on consistent "patterns" that occur in every soccer game.
- Spontaneity: Movement and decisions with the ball that are more "felt" than processed intellectually.

Some common characteristics of any effective coaching style include but are not limited to the following considerations:

1. The method and style helps the players win their game, find success and solve the problems that they are experiencing in the game.
2. All players want to play without interruption.
3. The coach considers and respects the rhythm of play when looking to make a coaching intervention, looking for ways to coach without interrupting the rhythm of the game and to make any coaching interventions as non-invasive as possible.
4. Is the coach able to anticipate the problems as they develop on the field, or is he/she addressing only the result?
5. The guidance that the coach provides prepares the players to be successful at their current level as well as at the next level or age group.

2.1 The Coach's Tool Kit

Every coach needs a variety of coaching methods to use as tools with his/her teams. Here is a tool kit of 5 coaching methods and explanations of their use.

1. Coach within the flow of the game. This is successful with players whose technique allows them to process and play at the same time. The coach provides clear, brief instruction to individuals or small groups of players as the ball is

Example of Coaching Small-Sided Games (5v5)

moving. This is not an ongoing monologue, but comments at a critical time to influence play. The caution here is to not let this become noise.

2. Coach the individual player as the game continues. Here the coach stops an individual player to make a 'coaching point, but does not stop the activity. While the coach interacts with the player, his team plays a "man down." Obviously the interaction must be brief and concise to get the player back into the activity.

3. Coach at natural stoppages. Here, the coach addresses groups of players during times when the game is still, e.g., when the ball goes out of bounds; at water breaks; change over. While being brief and concise is always important, here it is important to focus on a problem that is fresh in the player's mind.

4. Allow the conditions of the activity to coach the theme. Here the conditions of the activity provide the problem for the players to solve. For example, using the 6 goal game to coach small group defending. Defending three goals forces the players to pay particular attention to cover and balance. Conversely attacking three goals will reward the team that can change the point of attack quickly and accurately.

5. Coach using the "freeze" method. Here the coach "freezes" the game to make his coaching point. This allows the coach to "paint" a very visual picture for the players. Use this option with care, because if used too often, it can disrupt the game and frustrate the players.

A **technical freeze** allows the coach to correct incorrect technique and is coach directed. Here, the coach can demonstrate proper technique and have the player rehearse the technique.

A **tactical freeze** is often coach directed, but can benefit from guided questions as well. If we use questioning, then the questions should state the problem. e.g. "We are giving the ball away coming out of the back, how can we prevent that from happening?" The tactical freeze should be reserved for "big picture" situations involving several players. Optimally, the play should be "frozen" just as the situation presents itself. e.g. as the defender should be "stepping" to the ball.

Coach the flow of the play as much as possible.

I have found that this coaching tool kit and Methodology has been great for the development of our young player, it has also made me feel I have become a better coach. Give this a try. I think you will be pleased with the results.

Thank you.

Scott Semonco D.C.U.S.A Rep.

All materials are referenced from the license d coaching manual.

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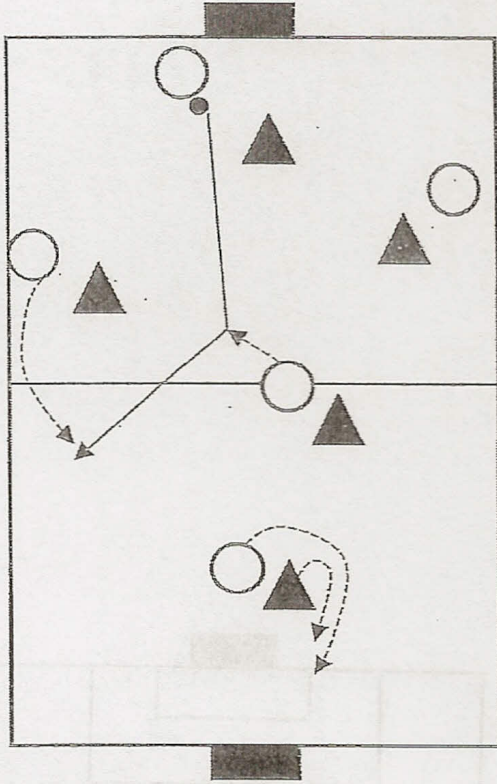


Diagram #1

5v5 Attacking Shape – Team of O's have achieved good attacking shape and are able to provide the player on the ball with a central player in which to play through. Notice the space created in the center of the field by the flank players staying wide. This allows the player with the ball to play a through pass to the checking player. The deep attacking player makes a run away from the space that eventually the wide player will enter on the dribble. This run shows intelligent "playing without the ball" by creating space for the on-coming player by drawing the opponent away.

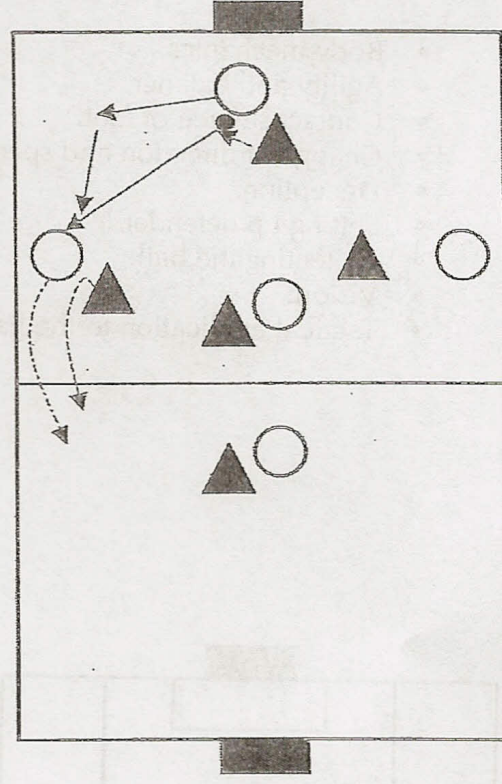


Diagram #2

5v5 Defending Shape – Team of ▲'s have achieved good defending shape by pushing forward and pressing the attacking team in their half of the field. Notice the position of the central defending player to prevent the attacking team from playing through their central player as well as the flank defender tracking the opponent trying to run behind into space. Transition between attack and defense must be immediate in order to prevent the attacking team from penetrating quickly.

Note – In this 5v5 game only field players are used. Large goals and GK's may be added to change the game to 6v6.