



## Lincoln YMCA Soccer Player Developmental Handbook



*"From the perspective of player development, we must embrace the viewpoint that growth is a process. Players do not develop in just one season; it takes several years. Unfortunately, many young players are either selected out, or drop out at too early an age, largely because playing is no longer enjoyable." Dr. Ronald Quinn, Head Women's Soccer Coach Xavier University.*

**Goal:** The goal of this handbook is to provide coaches of micro, recreational, and Spirit Club soccer players that comprise the YMCA soccer family a general guide to assist them with creating an environment that helps their players improve, develop, and enjoy the game to the level to which the player desires.

**Approach:** The information presented below has been compiled from a variety of sources including the National Soccer Coaches Association of America and U.S. Youth Soccer along with other published resources. The guide is designed based on a model of players developing the mastery of techniques and tactics through four basic stages for which there has been a typical age level assigned. The movement of a player from one stage to the next is dependent on:

1. The time players spend time on the ball, both at practice and on their own. Whenever in doubt let them play.
2. Player experience in previous stages in terms of the time they spend on the ball and mastering related techniques.
3. Taking no shortcuts!!! Each stage is vital and a prerequisite to the next stage.
4. Physical and intellectual development of the players. Each player will progress through the stages differently.
5. Tactics cannot be developed without technical skill.

**Sources:** Arnot, B., Introduction to Coaching the U8-U10 Player, Eastside Youth Soccer Association, [http://www.eysa.org/eyacoaching\\_manual.htm](http://www.eysa.org/eyacoaching_manual.htm). Last viewed January 2006. Bradbury, T. 2007. When are they ready? Soccer Journal. November-December, p. 50-51. Fleck, T. and others. 2002. The Official US Youth Soccer Coaching Manual. US. Youth Soccer. ISBN 1-931720-01-0. Ford, D. 1999, Coaching Youth Soccer: An Essential Guide for Parents and Coaches. The Lyons Press. 117p. Henrichs, A. and others, U.S. Women's National Teams Program, U12-U19 Club, State, and Region Curriculum Guidelines. <http://www.nebraskasoccer.org>. Last viewed February 2006; Wein, H. 2001. Developing Youth Soccer Players. Human Kinetics, 216 p. US Youth Soccer National Youth License. Characteristics of U-6 to U12 Players. <http://www.nebraskasoccer.org>. Last viewed February 2006.

*"The majority of youth players will only continue to play and to coach into their adult lives if they have experiences during their youth which allow them to master the fundamental techniques of the game." Tim Bradbury, NOGA Soccer Director of Education*



Stage	Typical Age Level	Techniques and Tactics
3	9-10	<p><b>Player Characteristics:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Players are developing ability to focus longer and stay on task.</li> <li>» Significant improvement in memory.</li> <li>» Significant physical differences exist.</li> <li>» Association with team increasingly important.</li> </ul> <p><b>Strategies:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Continue to emphasize mastery of stage 2 skills.</li> <li>» Explanations brief and concise (less than 30 seconds)</li> <li>» Begin to link activities with the technical and tactical abilities of the players.</li> <li>» Build on their experiences and provide them opportunities to solve problems on the field.</li> <li>» Players learn better when they are given the opportunity to resolve problems on their own without the help of the coach.</li> <li>» Ask them questions to promote problem solving.</li> </ul> <p><b>Techniques:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Speed</li> <li>» Heading</li> <li>» Applying defensive pressure</li> <li>» Driven balls – instep drive and outside of foot.</li> <li>» Receiving ground and bouncing balls with inside and outside of foot.</li> <li>» Develop ability to turn on an opponent.</li> <li>» Introduce crossing.</li> </ul> <p><b>Tactics:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Players begin to think of, or anticipate, the ball. They start to recognize when and where to move with and without the ball. Introduce 1 v 1 defending; roles of 1<sup>st</sup> attacker and defender; 2 v 1; attacking two player combination – overlap, wall pass, take-over, etc.; possession (4 v 1; 3 v 1, 4 v 2).</li> </ul>

Stage	Typical Age Level	Techniques and Tactics
4	<p data-bbox="388 235 472 259">11-12</p> <p data-bbox="315 300 535 373">"dawn of tactical awareness"</p> <p data-bbox="315 414 535 706">At this age, is where the largest number of players are lost from the game because "it is not fun anymore."</p>	<p data-bbox="567 235 871 259"><b>Player Characteristics:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="567 267 997 292">» Looking more like real soccer players.</li> <li data-bbox="567 300 1344 324">» Developing the ability to sustain complex, coordinated skill sequences.</li> <li data-bbox="567 332 1270 357">» Most players are becoming more capable of thinking abstractly.</li> <li data-bbox="567 365 1197 389">» Can problem solve creatively and while they are moving.</li> <li data-bbox="567 397 1144 422">» More serious about game but it still needs to be fun</li> <li data-bbox="567 430 1039 454">» Players more susceptible to peer pressure.</li> </ul> <p data-bbox="567 495 724 519"><b>Strategies:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="567 527 1018 552">» As a coach, you are a critical role model.</li> <li data-bbox="567 560 1375 584">» Explanations still brief and concise (less than 30 seconds) and tell "why".</li> <li data-bbox="567 592 1564 617">» A positive encouraging environment is critical.</li> <li data-bbox="567 625 1659 649">» Provide players the opportunity to problem solve, think creatively and solve problems while moving.</li> <li data-bbox="567 657 1323 682">» Critical time to teach the basic principles of attacking and defending,</li> <li data-bbox="567 690 1375 714">» Let them use their imagination to problem solve in a variety of positions.</li> </ul> <p data-bbox="567 803 724 828"><b>Techniques:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="567 836 1186 860">» Continued development of all individual technical skills.</li> <li data-bbox="567 868 1627 893">» Individual skill development needs to be done under the pressure of time, space, and an opponent.</li> <li data-bbox="567 901 997 925">» An increase technical speed is critical.</li> <li data-bbox="567 933 913 958">» Playing with back to pressure.</li> <li data-bbox="567 966 976 990">» Heading – Defensive and Attacking</li> </ul> <p data-bbox="567 1023 682 1047"><b>Tactics:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="567 1055 1123 1079">» Principles of attack and defending (1 v 1 to 3 v 3)</li> <li data-bbox="567 1088 682 1112">» Support</li> <li data-bbox="567 1120 693 1144">» Set Plays</li> </ul> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="1438 267 1732 292">» Play is more predictable.</li> <li data-bbox="1438 300 1795 324">» Players are openly competitive.</li> <li data-bbox="1438 332 1785 357">» Golden-age of motor learning</li> <li data-bbox="1197 527 1732 552">» Players need the opportunity to enjoy the game.</li> <li data-bbox="1197 584 1564 609">» Demonstration is very important</li> <li data-bbox="1207 893 1543 917">» Finishing and instep striking</li> <li data-bbox="1207 925 1543 950">» Defending - proper pressure</li> <li data-bbox="1207 958 1648 982">» Dribbling – 1 v 1 moves and shielding</li> <li data-bbox="1207 1055 1806 1079">» Possession and "numbers up work" (5 v 2, 7 v 4, etc.)</li> <li data-bbox="1207 1088 1774 1112">» Basic combination play (Wall pass, Overlap, etc.)</li> <li data-bbox="1207 1120 1837 1144">» Basic Defending Cover; and Marking. Immediate chase</li> </ul>