



U9/U10 HCSC Competitive Players Guideline

Player Development Guideline

The goal of this document is to:

- Establish clear and age-appropriate goals and objectives so our coaches, players and parents know what we are working towards.
- Establish objectives so coaches have a common understanding of which skills players should have when they proceed to the next age group.
- Establish appropriate priorities and focus areas in the four elements of the game (technical, tactical, psychological, and physical)
- Ensure consistency among our programs so we are all teaching the same way and using the same vocabulary
- Create confident coaches that are better prepared

Field Play- Technical Skills:

- Dribble with all sides of both feet (inside, outside, sole)
- Dribble out of trouble
- Dribble past someone (feints, fakes, stepovers etc.)
- Change of direction (rollback, inside/outside turns, Cruyff turn)
- Soft first touch
- Receiving the ball with inside and outside of foot and chest
- Shielding-
- Shooting with both feet (with inside of foot and laces)
- Shooting for power, for accuracy, and volleying
- Passing with inside and outside of both feet
- Juggling with both feet and thighs (allowing one bounce between juggles if needed)
- Basic throw-in technique
- Introduce proper defending techniques
- Introduce block tackles
- Introduce basic goalkeeping technique

Field Play- Tactical Skills:

- Wall pass (give and go or 1-2)
- Importance of the first touch
- Immediate transition from defense to offense or vice versa
- Role of the second defender (cover)
- Width in the attack
- Player movement on throw-ins

Players should be exposed to these simple tactical scenarios and understand how to both attack and defend these game contexts.

- 1V1 (attacking and defending)
- 2V1 (attacking and defending)
- 2V2 (attacking and defending)

A lot of 1V1 activities should be incorporated into practice sessions to allow all the players to get plenty of opportunities to learn how to dribble past an opponent and how to defend a 1v1. The basic roles of first and second attackers and defenders should be introduced through 2V1 and 2V2 games and activities.

Psychological Development

Psychological focus at U9/10 level should be a major priority. Fostering an environment where our players can grow in confidence, try new things and have fun while doing it are critical to developing well rounded players.

- Keep it fun and enjoyable! This will help foster a desire to play (intrinsic motivation)
- Build confidence
- Encourage imagination and creativity
- Foster our players to be part of a team
- Promote independent decision making
- Promote problem solving
- Encourage players to learn to deal with winning/losing

Allow the players to make mistakes and encourage them to make their own decisions

As the players progress to U12, they play on larger fields and dribbling may not always be the best option. Players will need to understand when to dribble, when to pass, and to whom, and when to shoot on goal. At this stage, they will often choose the wrong option, but as coaches, and parents, we need to be patient with them and encourage them to make these decisions independently, especially during games. Aimless kicking or booting of the ball should not be encouraged.

At this age, the players are aware of the score and many parents and coaches are paying more attention to the results. You will start noticing many coaches and parents

yelling directions from the sidelines. We should remind ourselves and the parents of our players that improving their play and having fun are the main objectives. We should refrain from yelling directions to the players during games, as it will hamper their ability to make decisions independently.

Physical Development

Physical development is not a high priority for U9/10 soccer. Encouraging all players to play and participate and give their best is really all that is required.

- Just play soccer
- Introduce stretching (static and dynamic) in practices