



Coaching Curriculum – Under 9s



Ray Power Coach Education
Consultant - Mentor - Educator



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Dear Mark,

Thank you for your order of the Coaching Curriculum for your U9s.

It was a pleasure putting this together for you and I hope it helps you, and most of all your players.

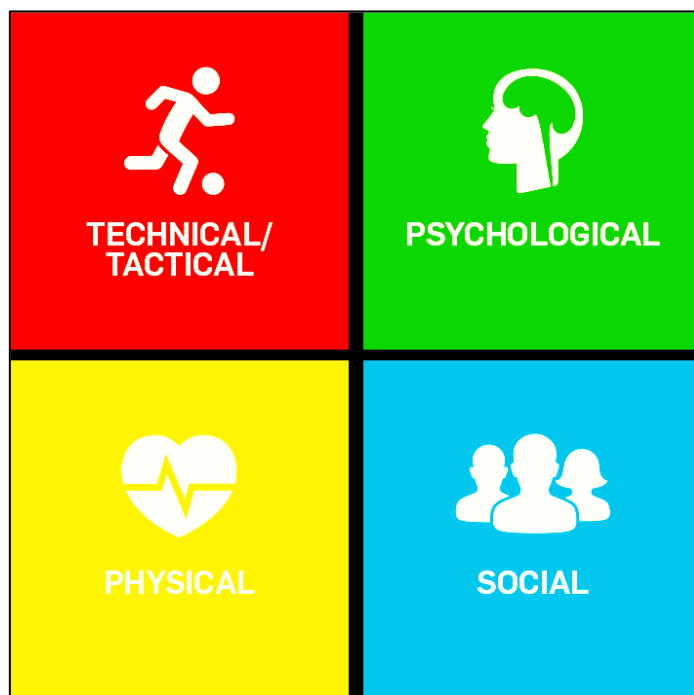
I hope this is useful for you and I would love to hear your feedback from it!

Regards,


Ray Power.



Coaching U9 Players – Long-Term Player Development



Long Term Player Development Model

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Golden Age of Learning” • Ball mastery exercises to maximize touches. One ball per player • Being able to control the ball (on ground and in air) is the foundation for development of other technical skills • Comfortable and confident in 1v1 situations. • Encourage them to stay on the ball as long as they can. • Putting technique into games is vital for the development of ‘skill’. • Resist putting limits on what players do with the ball • ‘Individual’ Tactics – Team tactics remain irrelevant • Let them play and experience the game, rather than stopping the play • Limited understanding of playing positions and the specialization of them positionally is discouraged 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create a culture and environment where players are not afraid of mistakes and are free to take risks with the ball. • Young players will dream about being the next Ronaldo or Messi, but cranking up any pressure about achieving this is fruitless. • One of the main reasons that young players stop playing sport is because there is too much pressure put on them! • If the FUNdamental stage is about falling in love with the game”, this stage is about ensuring players “stay in love with the game” • Players love to copy their heroes so encourage them to replicate the skills of their favorite players – let them try and explore • Age-appropriate use of the 5C’s
8 – 11 Year Old GOLDEN AGE OF LEARNING	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use Fundamental movement exercises to increase players’ physical literacy – a foundation of their technical development • When warming up, ensure you include a ball and ABCs exercises. • <i>Never have players warm-up by performing laps of the pitch. Can the coach see past the physical size of players?</i> • <i>Children begin to lose their natural flexibility from the age of ten!</i> Include and encourage static stretching in cool-downs • Aerobic system not yet developed – traditional ‘fitness’ work is more harmful than good 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Players are still egocentric but start to engage in group-play. • Encourage cooperation and teamwork, although they may understand the concept more than how to put it into practice • Players do not want to share, so expecting and insisting that they share the ball can be a tough • Feedback will always be about <i>me</i> • Players should be encouraged to participate in lots of different sports to allow them to learn lots of skills that are transferable to soccer
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General age-appropriate characteristics of U9s



Coaching Curriculum

Even when you are working with a curriculum, you are still working with the full game. Just because your focus may be on dribbling, for example, the rest of the game is still taking place, and players are still implicitly practicing the whole game. It is important that we acknowledge what we will be *explicitly* teaching, and aware of what they are *implicitly* practicing.

Technical Programme:

A coaching curriculum at this age is heavily technical. Any tactical / game understanding info will be basic, and returns will mostly be from Small-Sided Games that will basically teach them the principles of attacking and defending. At this age you want players to become familiar with the ball, and how to control and manipulate it effectively. Even the small defending focus in your curriculum is designed for these young players to implicitly practice 1v1s, both attacking and defending.

Your 40-week season has been split into six blocks. Blocks 1 and 6 are six weeks in length, whereas Blocks 2, 3, 4 & 5 are seven weeks long. The layout of each block is the same, as is illustrated below. Week 7 of Blocks 2, 4 & 6 are reserved for Small-Sided Games.

BLOCK LAYOUT							
Week:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
TOPIC							
Receiving the Ball							
Being with the Ball							
Moving and Changing Direction with the Ball							
Striking & Sharing the Ball							
Attacking with the Ball – 1v1							
Playing without the Ball (Defending)							
4v4 Small-Sided Games Week (Block 2, 3, 4 & 5)							



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Regardless of the weekly topic, players should experience the following in most sessions:

- **A fundamental game** which allows them to work in the physical corner, in an appropriate way. These games can be linked to your topic. For example, when the session is turning with the ball, we can practice turning in our fundamental game. When the session is dribbling, we can practice changing direction and accelerating.
- **A ball mastery practice.** This is simply where players all have a ball each and can practice manipulating it, again, in relation to the topic.
- **1v1 practices** where player experience both attacking and defending 1v1. This may be a stand-alone practice, or it may simply be a part of a conditioned 4v4 or 5v5 SSG. The beauty of 4v4 or 5v5 games is that they produce lots of 1v1 situations.
- **2v2, 3v3, as well as 4v4 and 5v5,** give players *implicit* experience of playing the game, attacking and defending etc. Compared to larger small-sided games (e.g. 8v8), 4v4 / 5v5 format allows for more and more meaningful touches, shots, 1v1s etc.

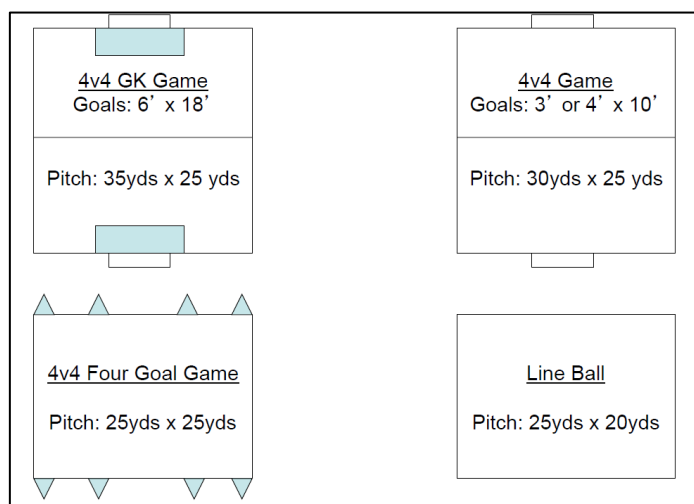


Small-Sided Games

Manchester United SSG Study:

SSGs are a great learning environment in terms of technical / tactical development, but also encourages social interaction when the age groups are mixed. Here you can play a series of round-robin 4v4 games, based on the Manchester United Pilot Study on Small-Sided Games.

The layout for the games are below, as are some of the qualitative research identified by the study. These games inherently offer young players lots of technical outcomes, all within a game-understanding setting.



Quantitative Summary

On Average 4v4 versus 8v8 had:

1. 135% more passes
2. 260% more Scoring Attempts
3. 500% more Goals Scored
4. 225% more 1v1 Encounters
5. 280% more Dribbling Skills (tricks)

Quantitative Analysis*

	# of Passes	Scoring Attempts	Goals	1v1 Encounter	Dribbling Skills
2-Goal Game	170	44	18	51	39
Line Ball	160	NA	37	56	58
GK Game	149	49	17	92	36
4-Goal Game	106	62	28	52	45
8 v 8	108	20	5	28	16

*Numbers listed are "Mean" scores



Psychological Programme:

Also built into the program are psychological themes, with a premise for each block. This will be based around the 5Cs Model below. It is very important that this is age-appropriate, but it again allows you to focus on a single aspect. Just like above, you may spend a session focusing on commitment, for example, it doesn't mean that a player may not need help with confidence. Although the links are not seamless, I have tried to link the psychological aspect to the technical. Concentration when defending, confidence when dribbling etc.



Graphics and model taken from *Coaching Psychological Skills in Youth Football* by Richard Anderson and Chris Harwood



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YOUR Coaching Curriculum



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BLOCK 1			
Week	Meso Topic	Micro (Session) Theme	Psychological Theme
1	Receiving the Ball	Receiving the ball using the inside and outside of both feet	Introduce players to the 5C's
2	Being with the Ball	Manipulate the ball with inside & outside of both feet	
3	Moving and Changing Direction with the Ball	Dribbling using all surfaces of both feet	
4	Striking & Sharing the Ball	Short passing with inside of both feet	
5	Attacking with the Ball	Beating an opponent 1v1	
6	Playing without the Ball (Defending)	1v1 Defending when facing an opponent	



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BLOCK 2			
Week	Meso Topic	Micro (Session) Theme	Psychological Theme
1	Receiving the Ball	Receiving the ball with both feet while on the move	Commitment
2	Being with the Ball	Manipulate the ball with sole and laces with both feet	
3	Moving and Changing Direction with the Ball	Experimenting while dribbling and turning with the ball	
4	Striking & Sharing the Ball	Short passing with the inside and outside of both feet	
5	Attacking with the Ball	Beating an opponent 1v2	
6	Playing without the Ball (Defending)	1v1 Defending – prevent turning	
7	Manchester United Small-Sided Games Week		



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BLOCK 3			
Week	Meso Topic	Micro (Session) Theme	Psychological Theme
1	Receiving the Ball	Using both feet to control balls from the air	Communication
2	Being with the Ball	Manipulate the ball with toe & heel using both feet	
3	Moving and Changing Direction with the Ball	Turning and changing direction with the ball using all surfaces	
4	Striking & Sharing the Ball	Passing using 2 / 3 touches maximum	
5	Attacking with the Ball	Introduction to Counter-Attacking	
6	Playing without the Ball (Defending)	Defending Outnumbered 1v2	
7	Manchester United Small-Sided Games Week		



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BLOCK 4			
Week	Meso Topic	Micro (Session) Theme	Psychological Theme
1	Receiving the Ball	Using chest and thigh to control balls from the air	Concentration
2	Being with the Ball	Clever manipulation / experimenting with moves with the ball	
3	Moving and Changing Direction with the Ball	Moves to beat an opponent	
4	Striking & Sharing the Ball	Clever passing	
5	Attacking with the Ball	Attacking with superior numbers	
6	Playing without the Ball (Defending)	Defending 2v2 / 3v3	
7	Manchester United Small-Sided Games Week		



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BLOCK 5			
Week	Meso Topic	Micro (Session) Theme	Psychological Theme
1	Receiving the Ball	Receiving awkward balls (bouncing, deflected etc.) with unusual body parts (stomach, shoulder etc.)	Communication
2	Being with the Ball	Manipulating the ball when it is off the ground	
3	Moving and Changing Direction with the Ball	Running with the ball into space	
4	Striking & Sharing the Ball	Penetrative passing	
5	Attacking with the Ball – 1v1	Finishing aerial balls – volley / half-volley / heading	
6	Playing without the Ball (Defending)	Defending in Small Groups / Units	
7	Manchester United Small-Sided Games Week		



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BLOCK 6			
Week	Meso Topic	Micro (Session) Theme	Psychological Theme
1	Receiving the Ball	Controlling all types of balls using all surfaces (ground and aerial)	Confidence
2	Being with the Ball	Manipulating the ball using all surfaces	
3	Moving and Changing Direction with the Ball	Moving and changing direction with the ball in all ways	
4	Striking & Sharing the Ball	Possession - keeping the ball	
5	Attacking with the Ball – 1v1	Finishing 1 and 2 touch in and around the box	
6	Playing without the Ball (Defending)	Defending In and Around the Box	