

ODP Curriculum

The Connecticut Junior Soccer Association Olympic Development Program Curriculum is designed to meet the needs of Connecticut's emerging elite players.

Because players at these ages are in different stages of physical and psychological development, the curriculum is composed of four modules that progress and cross age groups, which allows ODP staff coaches to bend and flex the curriculum to meet individual needs.

The curriculum objective is individual player development. An age group is not trained as a "team" to win a game, but is trained in an educational environment that permits each player to develop optimally at his or her own rate.

The focus of this development is technical training. Of the four components of soccer; technique, tactics, fitness, and psychology, the most critical component for players in these age groups is technique. In particular, the younger age groups focus almost exclusively on technique and the individual duel. As players advance to older age groups technical training is still a priority and progresses from general technical training to technical functional and then tactical functional training. Without the ability to play technically at speed, tactical options are limited to only the most primitive.

While tactical training is a secondary consideration in younger age groups, tactical preparation receives increasing emphasis as players reach the older age groups. Older players explore the collective tactics of the counterattack, restarts, systems of play, and styles of play in attack and defense.

Age group objectives should be considered a set of competencies. As players transition to the next age group they should have acquired and developed a set of competencies from previous age group(s) that forms a foundation for the next set of

competencies. Much as math progression proceeds from add-subtract to multiply-divide to Algebra-Geometry to Trigonometry to Calculus, acquisition of technique and tactics summates progressively as one set of competencies builds upon another.

Limited player contact time precludes a more comprehensive curriculum. Only those competencies considered most important to that age group are emphasized.

CONNECTICUT ODP AGE GROUP COMPETENCIES

Competencies for all age groups include:

1. Compete- Players must be as competitive and combative as possible within law and spirit of the game.
2. Transitions- At instant ball won, can it go forward (counter as get older)? At instant lost, get pressure and recover behind and inside ball.
3. Play on both sides of ball- All players part of the collective defending action or collective attacking action.

Players U-13 and U-14 yrs.
General Technical Execution

Overriding principles governing coaching players U-13 and U-14 years old.

1. Enjoyment in playing
2. Positive playing mentality
3. Many and varied activities emphasizing individual technique and playing in small numbers
4. Emphasize training games of 4v4-diamond shape
5. Connection in 2's - 1st and 2nd Defender and Attacker
6. Players play many positions
7. Roles not specialized

Technique

1. Dribbling- All objectives, possession and penetration
 - a. Shielding
 - b. Escape Maneuvers
 - c. Individual Moves
 - d. 1 v 1 duel in attack
 - e. Introduce receiving ball as preparation for next action (pass-cross-shoot-etc)
2. Striking Balls- Basic clean instep strike (Appendix A)
 - a. Playing to feet and playing to space
3. Finishing- All types
 - a. Shooting- power, accuracy
 - b. Slotting ball past keeper
 - c. Toe pokes, volleys, ½ volleys
 - d. Dribble goalkeeper
4. Crossing- First tactical objective- eliminate GK (Appendix B)
5. Heading- Basic elements of heading.
 - a. Heading to goal
 - b. Defensive heading

Tactical

1. Basic Combination Play
 - a. Wall Pass
2. Work of 1st and 2nd attacker and defender
 - a. Role of 1st attacker in achieving penetration or keeping possession

- b. Role of 2nd attacker in support of 1st attacker.
- c. Work of 1st and 2nd attackers as a playing unit to achieve penetration or keep possession at point of attack.
- d. Role of 1st defender in denying penetration.
- e. Role of 2nd defender in support of 1st defender
- f. Work of 1st and 2nd defenders as a playing unit to deny penetration at the point of attack.

Players U-14 and U-15 yrs.
General Technical Execution > Technical Functional Training

Overriding principles governing coaching players U-14 and U-15 years old.

1. Reinforcement of principles from previous ages, especially individual technique
2. Able to see and execute more options
3. Playing in larger numbers, emphasize training games of 5v5 in diamond shape with CMP
4. Players play fewer positions
5. Some role specialization
 - a. Attacking vs. defending predilection
 - b. Central or organizing players, vs. flank players

Technique

1. Dribbling- All objectives, penetration and possession
 - a. All objectives from previous ages reinforced
 - b. Dribbling in relation to location on field. Dribbling in relation to thirds of the field. Dribbling centrally or on flank
2. Striking balls- Pure instep drive; bending ball, emphasize outside of foot.
 - a. Introduce technical functional training- flank players crossing- central players long and short distribution, changing point of attack.
3. Finishing- All possibilities
 - a. Improvisational, often combining dribbling and then finishing.
 - b. Getting on end of crosses, including heading
4. Crossing- Appendix B

Tactical

1. Combination Play
 - a. Wall pass
 - b. Double pass
 - c. Setting up pass
 - d. Take over
2. Balance a 3rd attacker
 - a. Emphasize how to balance a single third attacker
 - b. Within different numbered exercises (e.g. 3v3 to 6v6), how one 3rd defender will balance the immediate third attacker.
3. Unbalance a 3rd defender
 - a. Emphasize how to unbalance a single third defender
 - b. Within different numbered exercise (e.g. 3v3 to 6v6) how one 3rd attacker

will unbalance the immediate 3rd defender.

4. Introduce Zonal Defending

2. Team Shape

- a. How to make field small in defense.
- b. How to make field big in attack.
- b. Introduce concept of four blocks.

Players U-15 and U-16 yrs.
Some Functional Practice- Intro Tactical Functional Training

Overriding principles governing coaching players U-15 and U-16 years old.

1. Reinforce all principles of younger age group.
2. Execute options faster
3. Connection in threes
4. Emphasize training games of 7v7 with various shapes. Impact of four blocks.
5. Playing through the thirds in attack and defense
6. Players tactical functions more specialized e.g. defensive MF player vs. attacking MF player

Technique

1. Dribbling- Relate to tactical function
 - a. Objectives reinforced from younger ages
 - b. More specialized dribbling according to tactical role and demands of the game.
 - c. Recognize type of dribble required to meet tactical situation.
2. Striking Balls- Relate to tactical function
 - a. Objectives reinforced from younger ages.
 - b. Introduce concept of advantage space
 - c. Technical application of long and short passing to meet tactical need
3. Finishing- Further refinement
 - a. Exercises representing game situations
 - b. Attacking spaces in box
4. Crossing- Appendix B

Tactical

1. Balance a defense- A block (MF or defending block) working together to balance the defense.
2. Patterns of movement of 3rd attackers to unbalance the defense
3. Develop zonal defending concepts.
4. Team Shape- Collectively on vertical and horizontal axes of field.
 - a. Making field small in defense and impact of pressure on ball to collective defending action behind the ball.
 - b. Making field big on attack, the work of 3rd attackers in advance of ball and 3rd attackers coming from behind ball.

Players U-16 and U-17 yrs.
Functional Practice- Tactical Functional Training

Overriding principles governing coaching players U-16 and U-17 years old.

1. Reinforce all principles of younger age groups.
2. Selection and execution of technique to meet tactical demand.
3. Execute technically at speed, under pressure of opponent
4. Emphasize training games of 9v9 in shapes to mimic different systems
5. Relation of tactical function to group and team function (style, system)

Technique

1. Emphasis on training players in a tactical functional environment. Identify specific technical deficiencies and train in general or technical functional exercises.

Tactical

1. Team shape on vertical and horizontal axes of field.
 - a. How “chains of defenders” move to pressure double team, etc. This accomplished from a zonal defending action.
2. High Pressure and Low Pressure defending-establishing a line of confrontation.
3. Direct and Indirect styles of attack
4. Tactics of the counter attack