Youth Players Information Thread

Posted by STLCoach - 20 Mar 2009 09:01

When a long ball is played into the opponents defensive players and you aren't able to win the first ball (meaning, the opponent will get to the ball before you will), many players will realize that they can try to win the second ball. This simply means conceding that the opponent will make the first touch of the ball so you try to take advantage of what might be a bad first touch and you win the second touch.

For example, the red player plays a long ball because they are under pressure and it goes toward the red central defender. A yellow forward is laying back with the idea that they will be able to win the second ball.
The problem with this is that the yellow central defender isn't being put under any pressure at all and as a result of this, most likely will be able to receive the ball with the first touch and keep it under control and away from the red player.
In order to win the second touch, the first touch usually needs to be pressured. When possible, this would be done with a second player. Next example, The same ball is played in but now, instead of the red player staying back and hoping to win a second touch, he pressures the player and a second player on his team comes in to win the bad touch.
By pressuring the ball, it changes things from hoping for a bad touch to creating the bad touch by the opponent. This greatly increases the likelihood of you, or your teammate, winning the ball and creating a goal scoring opportunity.

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Youth Players Info Hands, Arms & Defending

Posted by STLCoach - 26 Mar 2009 07:38

If a long ball is passed in from the midfield, it's perfectly acceptable for the red player to get his arms up and out a bit (arms bent at a 45 degree angle) to maintain your space BUT, as soon as the referee sees you put your hands on the opponents back or shoulders, he will call a foul on you.

It doesn't matter if you are gaining an advantage by pushing off of the opponent, or you are keeping the opponent from jumping or you simply are in the habit of doing this, as a general rule, if you put your hands directly on the opponent, you will get called for a foul more times than not.

Another issue is that when you place your arms or hands on a players back you lose all balance.

The only thing that will get you called for a foul quicker is, after putting your hands on the opponent, you then raise your hands to show you were innocent and didn't commit the foul. This is seen by many as being a sure admission of guilt.

Keep your hands and arms off the defender, use your arms to maintain your space out to the sides & around and you are much more likely to:
Win the ball
Keep you balance and position
AND not get called for the foul.
It is impossible to play soccer with your arms down. It is not against the rules of soccer to have your arms up.
It is also not safe for the player to play this way. Just keep your arms off the opponents back.

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Youth Players -Spinning off

Posted by STLCoach - 02 Apr 2009 05:54

When a target player receives the ball upfront(the forward is a target player), with a defender on his back, if the target player feels he can turn, he should. However, in many cases, the target player doesn't feel he can turn so he would lay the ball to another player (either a recessed forward or a midfielder or back).

When the ball gets played back, the target player should then look to spin to get behind this defender and receive a return pass. The key to this type of spin is to spin in the opposite direction that you play the ball. By doing this, it makes it extremely difficult (if not impossible) for the defender to watch both you and the ball.

The key to remember is if you play the ball back to your right side, spin to the left and if you play the ball back to your left, spin to the right.

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Think Like your Opponent

Posted by STLCoach - 09 Apr 2009 10:31

Assuming the opponent has a reason for doing what they are doing (and at the very young ages, this might not be a safe assumption but hopefully older teams do), it's important to be able to think like they are thinking and react accordingly.

Let's start by saying that whenever possible, I prefer to control what is happening on the field as opposed to letting the opponent control things. However, even with this way of thinking, it's important alter your plans based on what the opponent is thinking.

As an example yellow 1 has the ball and yellow 2 is out wide on the far side.
If you are responsible for marking yellow 2, some might think to get as tight to him as possible.

The logic in getting this close is to maintain close contact and make sure he doesn't receive the ball.

The problem with this logic is that it's not taking into consideration of what yellow 2 is thinking. Most likely, he is playing out wide hoping to draw you out wide which will do one of two things. First, it puts the red defender marking yellow 1 on a true 1 v 1 situation as you can no longer provide support. If yellow 1 dribbles past the defender, he goes straight to goal and you are so far away that you can't provide any support.

Or, yellow 2 is trying to draw you wide so that he can make a run into space and receive a through ball that puts him to goal.
If you know this is what yellow 2 is trying to do, you would mark him completely differently. Instead of being right on him, you would fall back and toward the middle to provide support for the first defender and also take away the space for yellow 2 to run into.

This is just one of many examples of how anticipating what the opponent is trying to do can nullify their

efforts and put you in greater control.

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Why do You play soccer?

Posted by STLCoach - 16 Apr 2009 10:04

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Why do you play soccer?

I'm much more interested in the response from players than from their parents or coaches so if you are a player, please reply and give a brief (or lengthy) answer to the question "why do you play soccer"

If you are a coach or parent, please ask players to respond.

We can look at the responses and conduct a survey.
Please post
your age,
whether you are a boy or girl,
and if you play recreational or club soccer.

please no names or emails or any personal info.

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Youth Players Information Change of Pace

Posted by STLCoach - 30 Apr 2009 09:19

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When I first started coaching, I was fortunate to coach a high school team with a young lady who was a two time high school All America. She grew up playing on teams with her older brother and his friends and her skill level was exceptional (it wasn't that it was exceptional for a girl, it was simply exceptional for anyone, male or female). However, the thing that really separated her from others on the field was her work rate. She never stopped moving and even when opponents would 'man mark' her all over the field and would rotate different players on her, eventually, she would wear them down. The first half she would typically be the best player on the field but the second half, when her constant movement and the constant pressure she put on the the opponent started to wear the opponents down, that was when she would start to really dominate. Her ability and willingness to work harder than anyone else, combined with her athleticism, skills and attitude, truly made her a special player. These traits allowed her to dominate at the high school, club and ODP level.

Because of her level of play, and level of commitment, combined with great grades, she was recruited by most of the top college soccer programs in the country. She chose one that she felt was a good fit academically, socially and athletically, went to preseason training prior to her freshman year and made a discovery.

Her discovery was that there were other players on her college team, just as fast, just as fit and just as determined. During the first scrimmage, when she was accustomed to having worn down the opponent, instead, she found they were just as prepared to keep going as she was. While she was accustomed to being able to keep moving at one speed and gradually being able to beat the opponent, now she found

this wasn't working.

Luckily for her, her college coach was a better coach than her high school coach was and he worked with her on slowing down, changing pace, and accelerating. Where before, she relied on fitness and speed to beat her opponents, now she was learning about doing it with her mind as well as her legs. I went to see her play early that season and for the first time ever, I saw her walking on a field, then all of a sudden she lost the defender by switching to a full sprint.

One of the things I hear a lot of coaches (and parents) say is soccer player runs for the entire game. They never walk and they never stand still.

The next time you watch a high level game, notice how often players are walking or jogging slowly and then changing pace into a full sprint.

I'm not trying to encourage players to walk more often, or to stand still but rather, to watch high level soccer, see their change of pace and learn from that experience.

Luckily for this young lady, her high school coach's inexperience didn't hold her back too far as she was a 4 time college All America. However, it does make me wonder how good she could have been if she had been taught this lesson sooner.

THIS IS ANOTHER REASON FOR NOT SUBBING PLAYERS AFTER 5-10 MINUTES. LET THEM PLAY FO 20-45 MINUTES WITHOUT BREAK AND WATCH HOW THE PLAYER ADAPTS TO THE GAME.

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