A bit of variety makes training more fun

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A bit of variety makes training more fun

By David Clarke

Improving skills is important for players and the team. But players, however motivated, will get bored with drills. Add a bit of variety to keep your players focused.
Put a time on it

After going through some of the drills, try putting a time limit on achieving a certain target. For example, five passes in one area followed by fives passes in another in 30 seconds.

The element of pressure builds a certain amount of tension, but also can lead to players enjoying the success. If they can beat their own or other players' times, they will enjoy the task even more.

Change the shape
Don't just drill in boxes or circles, use different shapes set out by cones. This will force players to think in different ways. Some coaches set out a snake-like shape with differing widths in which players must progress up the pitch. Also try passing on slopes or in long grass.

Different size balls
With all the different types of promotional balls, as well as age group balls, there are lots of different sizes you can use.

Don’t just practice with one size, get the players to pass using all shapes and sizes in one drill. The variety of shapes will challenge players to change the way they may receive and make a pass.

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My team can't play anymore and don't even turn up

Posted by STLCoach - 18 Feb 2010 03:57

Steve's Coaching Clinic
My team can't play anymore and don't even turn up for training.

"I coach an U11's 11-a-side team. In our last match they didn't string a pass together, my front three were offside every time we attacked and we lost a 100% record by losing 2-0. We train indoor and the basis of my training most weeks is passing, although I do all the basics (throw-ins, defending, heading etc.). My question is how often should I recap on each topic? Once every three weeks? Longer? More often? Getting all my players to turn up for training is also a major problem. I can't not play the ones who don't turn up as I have a small squad."

My answer:

I don't think you should worry too much. Even professional teams have off days and an occasional poor

performance, so it is to be expected from a team of U11s. Forget about it and focus on the next game.

Remember, there's no consistency in youth soccer!

Regarding training recaps, do them as required. That said, you need to follow a long-term plan with your coaching and it's a mistake to abandon the plan every time you spot a fault during matches.

Getting everyone to turn up for training is important. Is it parents not bringing their children or the players who don't want to come?

If it's the parents, you need to get them all together (or send out a letter) explaining why you need all your players to train every week.

If it's the players, you need to find out why they don't want to train. Ask them if they are enjoying themselves and, if not, why?

Do you think you've got the mix of drills and SSGs (small-sided games) right? I recommend that games take up 80% of coaching sessions.

Finally, I would get a bit tougher with the players who don't turn up to training without a good excuse. If there's no penalty for a lack of respect (and that's what not turning up at training is) it sends the wrong message to the rest of the team. Leave them out, even if it means you play with ten on match day.

Good luck!

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