



EASTERN NEW YORK YOUTH SOCCER ASSOCIATION

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The Game for All Kids!

“The single most important factor, by far, that affects the trajectory of a player's soccer development is the quality of the coach”

Being involved in the youth game as a professional coach is hard, being involved as a parent looking to make sensible developmental decisions is nearly impossible and finding an enjoyable and hassle free path as a player is challenging at best.

In the last 4 months the three bodies involved in youth soccer have all introduced documents, club guidelines and curricula which they have designated as the road map to success. All three while having some merit also serve to confuse the average soccer parent more than ever.

It takes a discerning eye, a background in coaching education and a political sensitivity tool to sift through the combined 500 pages of all three and find the gold dust that may be within.

In my opinion the most important and useful of the three is the us youth player development model available at http://www.usyouthsoccer.org/news/story.asp?story_id=6415

Yes it is a big read but quite frankly if the time spent reading it helps all soccer parents be able to find, recognize and evaluate a good developmental program then it is indeed time well spent.

The document provides easily readable and concrete information on the attributes of a modern coach, appropriate coaching techniques by age and good suggestions for those skills, games and aims which are suitable by age group.

For any interested parent or coach it is possible to focus in upon a specific age group and quickly become acquainted with what is good practice for that age.

The document is alive with sound advice, practical guidelines, practical coaching points and suggestions for practices.

I often get asked the following question by many of the soccer parents I meet,

“How do I find and what is the best developmental opportunity for my child”? The answer is a simple one and its simplicity and truth are reinforced by US Youth Soccer in this document.

Those parents wishing to seek the best environment for their child to learn and master the game within should seek to secure the following (*in priority*)

- **A suitably licensed and qualified coach. One who cares...?**

“The drive, the hunger, the passion must be inside you, because players need to recognize that you care.”

- **A club with a long term developmental plan and training curriculum that understands the winning v development debate for their coaches to work within and from. This curriculum must be a long term plan.**

“A club must have a model for the development of all players. The core for planned development is a sound curriculum. True player development occurs when each player's daily training and playing environment is of the highest quality.”



- **A club blessed with enough facilities and equipment to ensure that good practice environments can be provided.**

“Quality coaching and facilities will contribute positively to player development. Since player development is the backbone of the game, the construction of training grounds is a necessity.”

- **Enough players within the surrounding age groups to ensure that competitive games can be played. (we can compete with an emphasis on development.)**

Adult leaders structure competition to make it developmentally appropriate for these young players, they can benefit from the experience and develop the skills to prepare themselves for competition.

“We are asking our players to compete before they have learned how to play.”

I suggest that all interested parents and coaches find the time to read all current player development model and curriculum documents that have recently been made available.

In my next article I will be writing about those questions which a parent may ask of a Club/team as they set off on their soccer journey. A practical guide on the important questions to ask.

Please email me at DirectorofCoachingInstruction@enysoccer.com with any questions on the thoughts above.

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