

South Brunswick - Outline Coaching Curriculum

Mission Statement

This curriculum is designed to provide guidelines in the education and development of young players at South Brunswick Soccer Club. While not prescriptive, it does direct the focus of sessions away from the competitive focus at the younger age groups, and attempts to cover all important elements of the game rather than being result oriented. It does provide a comprehensive resource from which trainers and coaches can draw upon in relation to structuring seasonal plans for the development of their teams.

Introduction

The content of this curriculum is divided into sections, which are developed progressively based upon age-group needs. The structure and order of the topics in the curriculum are based upon certain concepts:

1. There should be virtually no positional specificity prior to large-sided soccer, and very little before U14.
2. it is easier to teach individually skillful players to pass the ball than vice-versa.
3. Players should be taught to make their own decisions wherever possible, rather than learning to rely on coaching instruction.

Session Breakdown

Given that most sessions will be 90 minutes, a recommended break-down might be close to this:

Warm-up (with ball) into individual skills work	20 minutes
Primary topic	30 minutes
Secondary topic*	20 minutes
Scrimmage – controlled into free-play	15 minutes
Cool-down	5 minutes

* Usually related to or progressing from primary topic

While recognizing that this will vary from topic to topic, this structure utilizes the warm-up time at the beginning of the session to progress into technical work, therefore warming up the player mentally as well as physically.

The scrimmage is controlled and becomes free play to allow the trainer to emphasize taught points and affect behavior early in the game, before adopting a less interventionist role as the game develops.

Structure

Each week is given one topic – there are 103 in total. However, the “ball familiarity and individual skills work that starts every season can be used (and developed) as part of the warm-up or cool-down of every session, therefore developing and improving touch and comfort on the ball throughout every training session. The ‘coerver’ type individual skills (and juggling –in a controlled and challenging environment) can be used well in this context.

The allowance of a secondary topic each week allows the trainer to devote some time to issues that may be causing particular concern in games. However, in allocating time for a primary topic, it is hoped that the trainers / coaches would not fall into the trap of developing players reactively based on game errors, but would seek to pro-actively build the technical requirements necessary for a holistic understanding of the game.

As most teams are trained twice in a week, each topic can be delivered twice, preferably in different ways to present the information in a variety of ways to the players. Where the trainer is only present for one of the sessions, the parent coach should work with the trainer to find a game which focuses on the training topic, and should get an understanding of the key points involved to enable the reinforcement of the work of the trainer.

All training is divided into four categories, which alter focus from the entirely technical at the youngest ages, through to more game-play at the older ages, but retaining some attention on the more advanced technical requirements of the game. Those sub-categories are as follows:

1. Technical
2. Attacking / Creating Space
3. Defending
4. Game-play

By far the greatest focus of this curriculum is technical, particularly at the younger ages, when it is almost exclusively technical. While the second session each week may be used to work on aspects of game play which are being exposed in game situations, the whole purpose of this curriculum is to avoid the reactionary approach to training – i.e. simply reacting each week to games rather than actually developing players – and missing out key elements of a player’s development in the process.

Flexibility

While avoiding a reactionary approach, it may well be that the order within a session (U10 Fall, U11 Spring etc) might change because of a perceived or actual need. However, every session should be taught, to ensure that players are exposed to all aspects of the game. As teams get older and approach high school age, the curriculum involves playing in different formations, zonal, man-marking, flat three / four etc. The purpose of this is to help develop flexible responsive players who will be able to adapt to the needs of different HS coaches.

Most town travel teams tend towards four defenders, consisting of three and a sweeper. Based on that, other systems are introduced later on, however if a team is already playing a different formation, clearly the order will change.

Other Notes

1. Some sessions are repeated. These are mainly the key sessions like creating space as a team, pressurizing individually and as a team. The repetition is intentional, and focuses players on the primary concerns of offense and defense. As the key points of these sessions will form the basis of the team's play, they will probably be repeated over and over in other sessions, as well as these ones.
 2. Repeated sessions will also have different key points as players get older, and can focus on more detailed information.
 3. The "Suggested Method: column allows trainers and coaches to make notes. Different training types will work with different teams and ability levels, and generally teaching different topics in different ways will provide a variety and balance to training sessions as a whole.
 4. While games and drills may be used as training aids, neither will make players better, nor are not a substitute for intervention. Drills create an environment in which errors in a specific area will occur and can be corrected by the trainer.
 5. Although targets effectively create target outcomes for each session, all players should be challenged at all time, including those who can easily achieve the session target at the beginning of the session.
 6. The existence of a progressive program in the four categories of play can be used to maintain the challenge for all players, enabling players to move onto the next challenge in that field.
 7. All technical topics should be taught a) unopposed, b) opposed, finally c) in game situations.
 8. Wherever possible, players should be encouraged to understand where and when techniques should be performed, rather than just how to execute them.
 9. One topic not included is communication. While some trainers / coaches will deliver sessions specifically on this subject, my own feeling is that it is integral to all areas, and to teach it separately gets away from that key fact. However, it does need to be constantly encouraged.
10. *The main criticism of this document will be "why are we not working on xxx until the 6th / 7th / 8th week? What's the point in doing it that late in the season when the players need to know it from the start? While a fair point in every case, the answer is that ideally everything is taught at the beginning of the season, but obviously that can't happen, and even if it could, is the suggestion that we then do nothing constructive for the remainder of the season? As identified above, individual teams have the flexibility to change the order in which sessions are delivered to suit the focus of their team, but every session by a paid trainer should teach players something new, and should have a training focus.*

Training Curriculum
Training session by Age / Season

U8 <i>Fall Season</i>		
Week	Topic	Suggested Method(s)
1	Ball familiarity and individual skills	
2	Dribbling – changing pace and direction	
3	Running with the ball	
4	Turning (1) – Key points of all turns	
5	Turning (2) – Quick turn, inside turn	
6	Shooting – laces strike, firm ankle, follow-through	
7	Passing – technique	
8	Defending - pressurizing the ball – fast then slow	

U8 <i>Spring Season</i>		
Week	Topic	Suggested Method(s)
1	Ball familiarity and individual skills	
2	Passing (1) – technique and basic selection	
3	Passing (2) - technique and basic selection	
4	Turning – outside turn, drag-back, shielding, into space	
5	Defending – recovering goal-side of the ball	
6	Attacking - aggressive attitude to shooting and following up	
7	Heading – forehead contact	
8	Ball control – feet	

U9 <i>Fall Season</i>		
Week	Topic	Suggested Method(s)
1	Ball familiarity & dribbling – scissors & double-touch	
2	Creating space – long and wide	
3	Turning – Cruyff, step-over	
4	Heading – attacking the ball, offensive vs. defensive	
5	Control – thigh / chest / head	
6	Passing – lofted passes	
7	Defending – attacking the ball	
8	Shooting - observation and decision before shooting	

U9 <i>Spring Season</i>		
Week	Topic	Suggested Method(s)
1	Ball familiarity and individual skills	
2	Creating space – long and wide. Supporting play	
3	Dribbling – aggressive attitude to the tackle	
4	Turning – Cruyff, step-over, L-turn	
5	Heading – direction, passing the ball	
6	Game-play – taking the space	
7	Defending – marking opponents (goal side)	
8	Shooting – 1v1 finishing	

U10 <i>Fall Season</i>		
Week	Topic	Suggested Method(s)
1	Ball familiarity and individual skills	
2	Game-play – playing with a sweeper	
3	Passing – selection of pass-type	
4	Creating space – switching play	
5	Creating space – overlap runs	
6	Shooting – observation and decision before shooting	
7	Dribbling – risk and reward in different thirds of the field	
8	Defending – recovery runs	

U10 <i>Spring Season</i>		
Week	Topic	Suggested Method(s)
1	Ball familiarity and individual skills	
2	Game-play – basic transition play	
3	Heading – challenging for the ball	
4	Dribbling – delivering an end-product	
5	Creating Space – the wall-pass (1-2)	
6	Attacking – across the goalkeeper & rebounds	
7	Turning –disguise, and use of appropriate foot	
8	Passing – feinting and disguising the pass	

U11 <i>Fall Season</i>		
Week	Topic	Suggested Method(s)
1	Ball familiarity and individual skills	
2	Checking to the ball and working the 1 st touch	
3	Support, and compactness in attack	
4	Attacking - Crossing and finishing	
5	Defending – marking (touch-tight & strong side)	
6	Creating space – cross-over runs	
7	Defending – supporting the pressuring player	
8	Attacking - Quick restarts	

U11 <i>Spring Season</i>		
Week	Topic	Suggested Method(s)
1	Ball familiarity and individual skills	
2	Passing – long lofted passes	
3	Creating Space – quick-play in the final third	
4	Defending – pressuring in the attacking third	
5	Creating space – reverse passes and take-overs	
6	Passing – bending the ball with inside / outside of the foot	
7	Dribbling – changing pace and direction	
8	Attacking – crossing into the prime target area.	

U12 <i>Fall Season</i>		
Week	Topic	Suggested Method(s)
1	Ball familiarity and individual skills	
2	Defending – pressurizing – body-shape & position	
3	Defending – 2 nd player support	
4	Defending – forcing play one way as a team	
5	Creating Space – movement off the ball	
6	Passing – possessing the ball & not forcing play	
7	Shooting – low, & far-post (+ rebounds)	
8	Crossing and finishing – intelligent offensive runs	

U12 <i>Spring Season</i>		
Week	Topic	Suggested Method(s)
1	Ball familiarity and individual skills	
2	Creating space – long and wide	
3	Crossing and finishing – linking play from midfield	
4	Shooting - variety of shot	
5	Defending - balance	
6	Transition play – defensive	
7	Transition - offensive	
8	Transition play – the moment possession changes	

U13 <i>Fall Season</i>		
Week	Topic	Suggested Method(s)
1	Ball familiarity and individual skills	
2	Attacking – creating space – receiving the ball	
3	Defending – pressurizing	
4	Defending - Being first to the ball in the air	
5	Game-play – playing the flat-four defense*	
6	Creating space – Y-runs	
7	Attacking – wide midfield movement	
8	Defending –compressing play in the opposing half	

U13 <i>Spring Season</i>		
Week	Topic	Suggested Method(s)
1	Ball familiarity and individual skills	
2	Breaking down the offside trap	
3	Playing a zonal 3 player defense	
4	Defending – defending against set-pieces	
5	Creating Space – creating width with 3 in defense	
6	Compressing play in midfield	
7	Crossing and finishing – midfield support	
8	Sustaining pressure in the attacking half	

U14 <i>Fall Season</i>		
Week	Topic	Suggested Method(s)
1	Ball familiarity and individual skills	
2	Attacking and defending set-pieces	
3	Game-play – playing a 4-3-3*	
4	Attacking – finding the space behind the defense	
5	Defending – pushing play up from the back	
6	Linking play between the forwards	
7	Attacking – being aggressive in the penalty area	
8	Attacking – aggressive attitude to shooting	

U14 <i>Spring Season</i>		
Week	Topic	Suggested Method(s)
1	Ball familiarity and individual skills	
2	Game-play – interchanging positions during a phase of play	
3	Crossing and finishing –getting wide defenders involved	
4	Attacking – intelligent movement after passing the ball	
5	Defending – sweeper supporting the defensive line	
6	Defending – wide midfielder / defender inter-support	
7	Attacking – 1v1s against the GK	
8	Attacking – midfield runs into the penalty area	

Training Curriculum

Sessions by category

Technical

1	Topic	Suggested Method(s)
2	Ball familiarity	
3	Heading – forehead contact	
4	Dribbling – aggressive attitude running at the defender	
5	Turning – Cruyff, step-over, L-turn	
6	Heading – direction, passing the ball	
7	Ball familiarity & dribbling – scissors & double-touch	
8	Ball control – feet	
9	Shooting – 1v1 finishing	
10	Shooting - observation and decision before shooting	
11	Dribbling – changing pace and direction	
12	Running with the ball	
13	Turning (1) – Key points of all turns	
14	Turning (2) – Quick turn, inside turn	
15	Shooting – laces strike, firm ankle, follow-through	
16	Passing – ball striking techniques	
17	Creating space – long and wide	
18	Turning – Cruyff, step-over	
19	Heading – attacking the ball, offensive vs. defensive	
20	Control – thigh / chest / head	
21	Passing (1) – technique and basic selection	
22	Passing (2) - technique and basic selection	
23	Turning – outside turn, drag-back, shielding, into space	
24	Passing – lofted passes	
25	Ball familiarity	
26	Passing – selection of pass-type	
27	Shooting – observation and decision before shooting	
28	Dribbling – risk and reward in different thirds of the field	
29	Heading – challenging for the ball	
30	Turning –disguise, and use of appropriate foot	
31	Passing – feinting	
32	Checking to the ball and working the 1 st touch	
33	Passing – long lofted passes	
34	Dribbling – changing pace and direction	
35	Passing – bending the ball with inside / outside of the foot	
37	Shooting – low, & far-post (+ rebounds)	

Attacking

Week	Topic	Suggested Method(s)
1	Attacking - aggressive attitude to shooting and following up	
2	Creating space – long and wide. Supporting play	
3	Creating space – switching play	
4	Creating space – overlap runs	
5	Dribbling – delivering an end-product	
6	Creating Space – the wall-pass (1-2)	
7	Attacking – shooting across the goalkeeper & rebounds	
8	Support, and compactness in attack	
9	Attacking - Crossing and finishing	
10	Creating space – cross-over runs	
11	Attacking - Quick restarts	
12	Creating Space – quick-play in the final third	
13	Creating space – reverse passes and take-overs	
14	Attacking – crossing into the prime target area.	
15	Creating Space – movement off the ball	
16	Passing – possessing the ball & not forcing play	
17	Crossing and finishing – intelligent offensive runs	
18	Crossing and finishing – linking play from midfield	
19	Creating space – spreading wide and long	
20	Shooting - variety of shot	
21	Attacking – creating space – receiving the ball	
22	Creating space – Y-runs	
23	Attacking – wide midfield movement	
24	Crossing and finishing – midfield support	
25	Attacking – finding the space behind the defense	
26	Attacking - Linking play between the forwards	
27	Creating Space – creating width with 3 in defense	
28	Crossing and finishing –getting wide defenders involved	
29	Attacking – being aggressive in the penalty area	
30	Attacking – aggressive attitude to shooting	
31	Attacking – intelligent movement after passing the ball	
32	Attacking – 1v1s against the GK	
33	Attacking – midfield runs into the penalty area	

Defending

	Topic	Suggested Method(s)
1	Defending – recovering goal-side of the ball	
2	Defending – attacking the ball	
3	Defending - pressurizing the ball – fast then slow	
4	Defending – marking opponents (goal side)	
5	Defending – recovery runs	
6	Defending – marking (touch-tight & strong side)	
7	Defending – supporting the pressuring player	
8	Defending – pressuring in the attacking third	
9	Defending – forcing play one way as a team	
10	Defending – pressurizing – body-shape & position	
11	Defending – 2 nd player support	
12	Defending - balance	
13	Defending –compressing play in the opposing half	
14	Defending - Being first to the ball in the air	
15	Defending – pressurizing	
16	Compressing from the back to deny space in midfield	
17	Defending - sustaining pressure in the attacking half	
18	Defending – defending against set-pieces	
19	Defending – pushing play up from the back	
20	Defending – sweeper supporting the defensive line	
21	Defending – wide midfielder / defender inter-support	

Game-play

	Topic	Suggested Method(s)
1	Game-play – playing with a sweeper	
2	Game-play – taking the space	
3	Game-play – basic transition play	
4	Transition play – defensive	
5	Transition - offensive	
6	Transition play – the moment possession changes	
7	Game-play – playing the flat-four defense*	
8	Playing a zonal 3 player defense	
9	Breaking down the offside trap	
10	Game-play – playing a 4-3-3*	
11	Attacking and defending set-pieces	
12	Game-play – interchanging positions during a phase of play	