



# COACHING FORMULA AND DEVELOPMENT CHARACTERISTICS: STAGE 5: 15-18 YEAR OLD PLAYERS

EXCERPTS FROM THE UNITED  
SOCCER COACHES PLAYER  
DEVELOPMENT CURRICULUM





United Soccer Coaches offers the following formula to guide coaches planning for the development of players in the fifth Stage of Development. Children approximately 15-18 years old. The coaching formula is designed to provide coaches with the recipe for producing the optimum learning environment for players, but these are only recommendations. The coach must also plan for local considerations that may affect the formula, such as climate, field availability, other sports and after school activities and social or religious restrictions.

COACHING FORMULA		
<p><b>COACHING THEME</b></p> <p>Priority themes for this stage of development. For a comprehensive list see United Soccer Coaches Competency Matrix.</p>	<p>Consolidate from Stages 1-3:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Attacking and defending in pairs and threes.</li> <li>2. Attacking possession.</li> <li>3. Transition to attack and defense.</li> <li>4. Attacking &amp; defending in small groups &amp; units..</li> </ol>	<p>Introduce at Stage 5:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Phases of play.</li> <li>2. Role specific training.</li> <li>3. Situation specific training.</li> <li>4. Advanced attacking and defensive concepts and tactics.</li> <li>5. Coaching in the game.</li> </ol>
<p><b>SESSION FREQUENCY &amp; DURATION</b></p> <p>How often &amp; long a training sessions should occur.</p>	<p><b>Competitive Players:</b> 2-3 seasons per year = 30-40 weeks per annum. 2-3 training sessions a week = 60-120 training sessions per annum.</p> <p><b>Recreation Players:</b> 1 to 2 seasons per year = 16-24 weeks per annum. 1-2 training sessions a week = 60-120 training sessions per annum. 75-90 minutes per session. Some sessions may be longer when combining classroom and field sessions.</p>	
<p><b>COACHING TIME ANNUALLY</b></p> <p>How many hours we should dedicate to training in a 12 month period.</p>	<p>100-180+ hours per annum in an organized coaching session with a suitably qualified and experienced coach.</p>	
<p><b>NUMBER OF ACTIVITIES DURING THE SESSION</b></p> <p>The total number of activities including warm-up, main theme and games.</p>	<p>1-3 activities per session related to one or two themes (see coaching themes). Each activity to last 15-30 minutes.</p>	
<p><b>NUMBER OF NEW ACTIVITIES</b></p> <p>The number of activities introduced into a training session that are new to the players.</p>	<p>Activity decisions will be determined by the theme. The coach could select 1 activity with multiple progressions lasting the entire session.</p>	
<p><b>BALANCE BETWEEN INDIVIDUAL AND TEAM FOCUS</b></p> <p>Ideal percentage of training dedicated to individual and team/group training.</p>	<p>20-30% of time should be dedicated to individual technical development. Up to 80% of time should be dedicated to team focused attacking and defending concepts and tactics.</p>	
<p><b>NUMBER OF COACHING POINTS</b></p> <p>Average number of coaching points/teaching moments a coach will wish to share in a session.</p>	<p>Plan to introduce and reinforce two to three key coaching points a session.</p>	
<p><b>GAME FORMAT</b></p> <p>Recommended practice and game format.</p>	<p>Practice - 1v1-8v8 format is ideal. Competitive game format - 11v11.</p>	



# DEVELOPMENT CHARACTERISTICS

## STAGE 5 - ADOLESCENCE/LATE PUBERTY (15-18 YEARS OLD)

During middle adolescence, puberty is well underway, and is complete in many teenagers. There is a decreased preoccupation with the body and an increased involvement with peers. Parental conflicts develop over independence, since the peer group often serves as the adolescent's reference for their standards of behavior. By the age of 16, most girls have completed the changes associated with puberty and most boys are well on their way to finishing pubertal development, having gained muscle mass and strength. If players in stage five have received appropriate coaching in stages 1-4, they will be ready to perform competently in game situations.

### DEVELOPMENT FOCUS:

- Team tactics should form a significant part of practice sessions and teams should be coached in team 'units' – defense, midfield and attack.
- Position training is important, and players should be prepared for a primary position.
- Physical conditioning is also important for all players and training should be tailored to the physical demands of their position on the field.
- On average, boys reach PHV in Stage 5. Aerobic power should be introduced progressively after growth rate decelerates.
- Optimum time for the introduction of strength training for boys (1-1 ½ years following PHV)
- The second speed training window opens for boys (13-16 years)
- Participation in other sports can enhance physical preparation and transferability to soccer. However, soccer should be the primary sport for serious and committed players.

## KEY DEVELOPMENT POINTS FOR CHILDREN IN STAGE 5

<b>PHYSICALLY</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Start of speed and strength training for male and female players.</li> <li>2. Aerobic conditioning following peak height velocity.</li> <li>3. Girls reach full maturity at the beginning of Stage 5 and boys peak around 16 years old.</li> <li>4. Shows improved posture and coordination in coping with physical changes.</li> <li>5. Needs to continue fitness activities, especially those that develop flexibility, aerobic and anaerobic efficiency, muscular strength and endurance.</li> <li>6. Can achieve advanced levels of complex skill and movement efficiency.</li> <li>7. Decreases in flexibility.</li> </ol>
<b>PSYCHOLOGICAL/ SOCIAL</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Increased interest in the opposite sex.</li> <li>2. Decreased conflict with parents.</li> <li>3. Deeper capacity for caring and sharing, and the development of more intimate relationships.</li> <li>4. Decrease time spent with parents and more time spent with peers.</li> <li>5. Strong social needs and desires.</li> <li>6. Wants and needs own voice in planning.</li> <li>7. Desires leadership roles.</li> <li>8. Team and group allegiance important.</li> <li>9. Developing into an independent person who is increasingly able to make choices, solve problems and accept responsibility for own actions.</li> <li>10. Developing more stable and emotional responses.</li> </ol>



# DEVELOPMENT CHARACTERISTICS

## KEY DEVELOPMENT POINTS FOR CHILDREN IN STAGE 5 *(Continued)*

### COGNITIVE/ MENTAL

1. More defined work habits.
2. More concern about future educational and vocational plans.
3. Greater ability to sense right and wrong.
4. Sadness or depression, which can lead to poor grades at school, alcohol or drug abuse, unsafe sex, thoughts of suicide, and other problems (Note: Problems at school, alcohol and drug abuse, and other disorders can also lead to feelings of sadness or hopelessness.)
5. Able to learn new skills in a short time.
6. Thinking becomes more practical and adaptive to take into account logical reasoning.
7. Changes are multi-directional and depend on education and understanding of the world.

### DEVELOPMENT CHARACTERISTICS TRANSLATED TO COACHING PLAYERS IN STAGE 5

At Stage 5, the players should have a firm grounding in all basic skills, techniques, movement skills, tactics and strategies. Depending on the individual's level of performance and understanding, coaches can progress to advanced tactics. Players should play to win, but training should still emphasize skill, physical and mental development. After players reach peak height velocity (the point when the tempo of growth is the greatest), aerobic training should be emphasized and conducted as much as possible with the ball at the players feet. Stage 5 also represent a window of opportunity for training speed. Gender differences exist; with second window opening for females with the onset of menarche (first menstrual period). For males, there is only one window and it begins a year to 18 months after peak height velocity.

#### Translated to player development this means:

1. Start of speed and strength training for male and female players (see above for timing).
2. Aerobic conditioning following peak height velocity.
3. Mental skills training to cope with stressful situations and mental challenges of competition.
4. Elite players should be focusing on soccer as the primary activity and supplemented by one other sport.
5. Training ratios should be 60:40 to competitive games.
6. Latest developments in sports science research should be reviewed and where applicable adopted.
7. Balanced strength training should be adopted – ensuring all muscles are equally trained.
8. Players should train in competitive situations in the form of practice matches and phases of play.
9. Players should be encouraged to watch high level games (college, WPS, MLS, etc.) to help understand advanced tactics and strategies.
10. Monitor over-training of players – ensure sufficient rest for recovery.
11. Nutritional and fluid intake advice should be sought.
12. Establish winning as a major objective of participation.
13. Involve players in decision making.
14. Use goal setting to provide direction and performance targets
15. Utilize different training methods such as video analysis, classroom discussions and team building.
16. Players should be challenged continuously – physically and mentally.
17. Warm-up and flexibility routines are extremely important before and after a training session or game.
18. Players should start to play one positional role more regularly – including, playing different midfield positions for example.
19. Ensure good two-way communication exists; do not allow hormones to be an excuse for negative or bad behavior.
20. Be conscious of favoring early maturing over late maturing players.