



COACHING FORMULA AND DEVELOPMENT CHARACTERISTICS:

STAGE 4: 12-14 YEAR OLD PLAYERS

EXCERPTS FROM THE UNITED
SOCCER COACHES PLAYER
DEVELOPMENT CURRICULUM





COACHING FORMULA - STAGE 4 (12-14 YEAR OLD PLAYERS)

United Soccer Coaches offers the following formula to guide coaches planning for the development of players in the fourth Stage of Development. Children approximately 12-14 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		
COACHING THEME Priority themes for this stage of development. For a comprehensive list see United Soccer Coaches Competency Matrix.	Consolidate from Stages 1-3: <ol style="list-style-type: none">Passing and receiving: 3 player combinations.Attacking and defending in pairs and threes.Shooting.Basic goalkeeping.	Introduce at Stage 4: <ol style="list-style-type: none">Attacking possession.Transition to attack & defense.Attacking and defending in small groups and units.Phases of play.
SESSION FREQUENCY & DURATION How often & long a training sessions should occur.	Competitive Players: 2-3 seasons per year = 30-40 weeks per annum. 2-3 training sessions a week = 60-120 training sessions per annum. Recreation Players: 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.	
COACHING TIME ANNUALLY How many hours we should dedicate to training in a 12 month period.	100-180 hours per annum in an organized coaching session with a suitably qualified and experienced coach.	
NUMBER OF ACTIVITIES DURING THE SESSION The total number of activities including warm-up, main theme and games.	1-3 activities per session related to one or two themes (see coaching themes). Each activity to last 15-30 minutes.	
NUMBER OF NEW ACTIVITIES The number of activities introduced into a training session that are new to the players.	Activity decisions will be determined by the theme. The coach could select 1 activity with multiple progressions lasting the entire session.	
BALANCE BETWEEN INDIVIDUAL AND TEAM FOCUS Ideal percentage of training dedicated to individual and team/group training.	30-40% of time should be dedicated to individual technical development. Up to 60% of time should be dedicated to small group/units working on attacking and defending concepts and tactics.	
NUMBER OF COACHING POINTS Average number of coaching points/teaching moments a coach will wish to share in a session.	2-3 - plan to introduce and reinforce two to three key coaching points a session.	
GAME FORMAT Recommended practice and game format.	Practice - 1v1-6v6 format is ideal. Small-sided games - 7v7 to 8v8 with goalkeepers. Some leagues will play 11v11 at 13-14 years old.	



DEVELOPMENT CHARACTERISTICS

STAGE 4 - ADOLESCENCE/LATE PUBERTY (12-14 YEARS OLD)

Dramatic physical changes are the hallmark of adolescence. Late stage 3 and early stage 4, there will be noticeable differences occurring in the growth of girls in comparison to boys. Girls (12 years) generally experience peak growth approximately two years ahead of boys (14 years). Since many young adolescents are unaware that the onset and rate of puberty vary greatly, they need reassurance that their own growth and development are normal, and they will benefit from learning about the progression of physiological changes. Most 12-year olds focus on social life, friends and school and they continue friendships with members of the same sex. Coaches must be sensitive to close friendships when selecting teams and generally working with children in stage 4 – emotional changes can enhance sensitivity and lead to conflicts between players and between players and adults.

DEVELOPMENT FOCUS:

- On average, girls reach Peak Height Velocity (PHV) in Stage 4. Aerobic power should be introduced progressively after growth rate decelerates.
- Continue to consolidate the performance of fundamental and advanced individual skills.
- Players should receive more in depth tactical instructions, particularly in understanding playing positions. Players should continue to experience different positions on the field.
- Optimum time for the introduction of Strength training for girls (immediately following PHV)
- A second speed training window opens for girls (11-13 years)
- The second speed training window opens for boys (13-16 years)
- Players should play other sports, but soccer should become the primary sport during the soccer season for the serious and committed players.

KEY DEVELOPMENT POINTS FOR CHILDREN IN STAGE 4

PHYSICALLY	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Boys – Stage 4 is the most likely time when boys start going through puberty.2. Girls – late developers start puberty at this stage but for many girls the later stage of Stage 4 is the conclusion of puberty.3. Significant proportional changes occur in bone, muscle and fat.4. Extremities grow quicker than the trunk resulting in a gangly appearance.5. Decreases in flexibility occur.6. Oxygen transportation is greatly improved due to increased production of red blood cells – aiding aerobic energy production.7. The nervous system is almost fully developed.8. Displays rapid but uneven physical growth, leading at times to awkwardness, uncoordinated movement, tiredness, lack of confidence and poor posture.9. Increase in female and male hormone levels.10. Increase in height, weight and musculature.11. Males develop deeper voices, characteristic patterns of facial/body hair become stronger.12. Females become wider at hips; breast development continues for several years.13. Girls may reach close to physical maturity.
PSYCHOLOGICAL/ SOCIAL	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Emotional development may not correlate to physical development–physical changes may occur earlier and develop more rapidly.2. Continued development of independence, yet wants and needs adult help.3. Players may start to question coaches and parents more readily and become less accepting - Less affection may be shown toward adults and players may sometimes seem rude or shorttempered.4. Hormones become more active & can lead to mood swings & behavioral fluctuations.5. Players are more interested in and influenced by peer group - Increasingly concerned about acceptance by friends.



DEVELOPMENT CHARACTERISTICS

KEY DEVELOPMENT POINTS FOR CHILDREN IN STAGE 4 *(Continued)*

PSYCHOLOGICAL/ SOCIAL <i>(Continued)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">6. Peer group becomes increasingly important in fostering independence and interaction with members of the opposite sex.7. Players become more concerned about body image, looks, and clothes.8. Focus on self, going back & forth between high expectations and lack of confidence.9. Eating problems sometimes start at this stage – resulting in reduced energy and poor performance.10. Shows tolerance of needs and abilities of others.
COGNITIVE/ MENTAL	<ul style="list-style-type: none">1. Players are able to think abstractly, and are able to contribute to critical thinking2. Player can become more egotistical- resulting in increased awareness of personal performance successes and failures.3. A heightened sense of personal achievement and striving for perfection/success.4. Players have more capabilities for complex thought.5. Better able to express feelings through talking.6. A stronger sense of right and wrong.7. Ready for in-depth, longer learning experiences.8. Has a continuing need for reinforcement and development of self-esteem, especially in relation to body perception and sport.9. Increasingly capable of making informed decisions and accepting a leadership role, although often may choose not to do so.10. Requires opportunities to be creative and may need consistent encouragement.11. Can concentrate and participate in activities for longer periods of time.

DEVELOPMENT CHARACTERISTICS TRANSLATED TO COACHING PLAYERS IN STAGE 4

Developing a team of players with large individual performance differences can create significant headaches for coaches. Pressure to prepare a team to compete against teams from different towns can often overshadow the needs of individual players. There is still a considerable amount for the players to learn as they are exposed to advanced techniques and team tactics. Players entering Stage 4 with competency in the basic skills are well placed to develop quickly. The hours spent developing individual mastery of the ball will pay dividends as the coach introduces activities where solid techniques are prerequisites for success.

Translated to player development this means:

1. Provide players with a variety of experiences by coaching them how to play a number of positions.
2. Educate players on the physical, cognitive and emotional changes occurring
3. Dynamic stretches prior to activity and static stretches following – flexibility naturally deteriorates so efforts must be made to regain range of motion.
4. Players should be given opportunity to play and train with others of similar ability
5. Conditions for aerobic training are right – increasing aerobic capacity will allow players to perform high intensity (anaerobic) activities more frequently and recovery will be quicker.
6. As the nervous system becomes refined, performing correct technique is essential.
7. Continue to focus on individual ball mastery.
8. Tactical focus must be determined based on readiness of the individuals.



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9. Players should be exposed to different positions and different roles.
10. Psychological training can be introduced such as coping strategies and mental imagery.
11. Bear in mind that early and late development has different implications for males and females.
12. Sessions should reinforce communication as an essential team skill.
13. Involve players in decision making and analysis of individual and team performance.
14. Create opportunities for team building.
15. Work with the players on attack and defensive strategies.
16. Speak to parents to ensure they understand and support the training methods employed.
17. Players should be working on flexibility, speed, endurance and strength – strength activities should be using their own body weight, Swiss balls and Medicine Balls.
18. The first training window for speed and strength for female players occurs immediately after peak height velocity.
19. The only training window for speed and strength for male players opens 12-18 months after peak height velocity.