

THE “LITTLE FRIENDS” CATEGORY U7 TO U9



Working philosophy of Soccer Italian Style

“LITTLE FRIENDS” U7 TO U9

When working with young children we must take into consideration they are not miniature adults, therefore training plans for the youngest have a completely different character and structure than training sessions for the older athletes.



Cognitive development

From a cognitive point of view we must know that a child of 6-8 years:

Has difficulty in focusing and concentrating, therefore he is not able to listen to long and complex explanations

Has difficulty in understanding abstract concepts but he is able to imitate a gesture if properly demonstrated.

Emotional/Social development

The child is still in the phase of “intellectual egocentrism” where the opinion of other people is not differentiated from his own. The child only sees his point of view. He believes everybody thinks like him and everybody understand his thoughts. Typically if the child tells a story he will do it in such a way that the listener does not understand anything.

The child depends on the adult so the group of friends is not as important yet, so the coach assumes a primary role as a central point of reference.

Motor skill development

Physically the child is not strong and has no muscle strength, but his behavior is very active. The child has no control of his movements, specially the quick movements. The child has a relative good joint mobility but the cardio and respiratory functions are not at their best yet.



The coach

Knowing the psycho and physical characteristics of the children allows the coach to organize appropriate seasonal plans, which content will be mainly practical and based on fun games. Only this way the child can enjoy the soccer school experience.



TRAINING SESSION

The training session that we propose is structured in 3 phases:

OPENING PHASE

CENTRAL PHASE

FINAL PHASE

OPENING PHASE

25'

Warm up game

Working module



WARM UP GAME

The phase of the warm up game is the moment when the children have freedom of expression with free exercises or games with themes and ball control, combined with various motor activities.

The warm up game must have fun and joyous elements, this will create a positive atmosphere within the group that will help obtain the maximum from the players during the session.



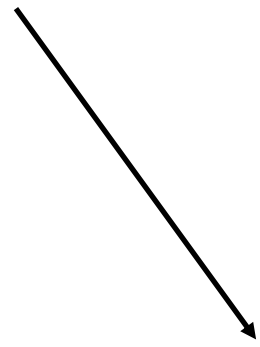
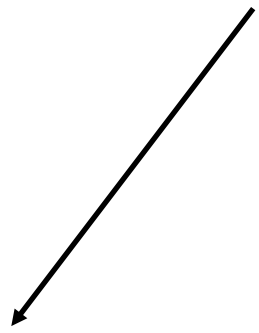


WORKING MODULE

In all the other parts of the session the coach must create and propose always new and fun activities in order to stimulate creativity and avoid repetitive activities. Within the working module we have a series of standard exercises, carefully selected based on past experience that must be repeated during each session.

The continuous repetition will allow the player to master simple but essential gestures, the base for all the future evolution of the player.

Working module



TECHNICAL BLOCK

TACTICAL BLOCK

The instructor will correct the execution of the technical gestures by stopping the exercise.



TECHNICAL BLOCK



This module focuses exclusively on improving two fundamentals:
running with the ball and ball control

We refer to all the series of motor activities that allow the children to run with the ball maintaining full control of it, change of directions, stop and go, using all the part of the foot (instep, outside, inside, sole)





TACTICAL BLOCK



We introduce a series of exercises to work on single feints and to beat the opponent.

We refer to a tactical block because we introduce the feints as part of the individual tactics when in possession of the ball, and because we start introducing the tactical concept of beating the opponent.



CENTRAL PHASE

20'

Technical exercise

Motro skill exercise

Technical exercise

This phase is devoted to the development of technical fundamentals like running with the ball, stop and control of the ball with the introduction of kicking the ball for passing and shooting. Every exercise will be finished with a shot on the net.

The instructor observes and correct but without stopping the players letting them repeat the exercise as many times as possible.

During the year these exercises can be presented also in game situation scenarios.





Motor skill exercise



The objective of motor skills exercises is the development of motor skills.

Motor skills are dynamic and are identified as the act of walking, running, jumping, catching, throwing, crawling, rolling, climbing.

In every phase of formation the instructor must work in conditions to increase the motor skills [potential. All this will benefit the activity, the cause of poor technique is to be found in a poor coordination of the player. Working on motor skills of the players will improve their technical skills.



Motor skill exercise



Another aspect to focus on is quickness and agility.

Presenting all the exercises in the form of competition and relay games will benefit the quickness ability, getting the children in the habit to execute the exercises with accuracy and in the least amount of time, a key element of modern soccer.

FINAL PHASE

15'

This is the phase for the free game.

Our idea of style of play for this age category, does not take into consideration the result and a game with many passes, but focuses on motivating the players to carry on individual plays, running with the ball, dribbling, controlling the ball, feinting and 1vs1 duels.



THE TYPICAL TRAINING SESSION

OPENING PHASE

25'

Warm up game

**Technical/tactical
block**

CENTRAL PHASE

20'

**Technical exercise/
situation**

Motor skill exercise

FINAL PHASE

15'