

**Roswell Soccer Club**  
**Player Development Manual**

**Fall 2005**

**By**

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# Roswell Soccer Club Player Development Manual

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## Acknowledgements

The Roswell Soccer Club would like to express gratitude to the committee of soccer professionals and club volunteers who have spent long hours discussing and summarizing their collective philosophy on soccer player development.

This manual was originally drafted in the fall of 2002 and it was hoped that the document will mark the beginning of a new era of soccer evolution within the community of Roswell, Georgia. As newly appointed Director of Coaching I wanted to continue the positive progress made by the RSC and provide a curriculum that will help enhance the development of our players and coaches.

The people who worked on this manual did so out of love for the sport, the community and especially their love for the children of Roswell who play with such joy and enthusiasm.

They are:

Mr. Vincent Marcotrigiano – Director of Coaching 2004-05

Mr. Eduardo Coloma – U16 boys coach and inspiration for the player development system that created this manual.

Mr. Mike Kramer – Former Board Member of the RSC and Club Coach

Mr. Jim Keel – President of the RSC, 2002 – 2003

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## Introduction

Soccer is, by far, the world's number one sport... in popularity, participation and all around fun. We believe that soccer is emerging as a major sport in this country for the same reasons it is the number one sport in the world. It is truly every man's sport, not requiring any special or unusual physical qualifications to play. It is a simple game, easy to learn for men and women, boys and girls.

We are in the process of organizing our club, hoping to see that the sport grows properly, so our youngsters can develop, learn, play and enjoy the game.

The purpose of this handbook is to guide individuals and the organization's parents, coaches and trainers in establishing a soccer program for youth, ages six through nineteen. It was written to assist both those familiar with soccer and those with little or no experience in the game.

This handbook, together with other materials should help speed the development of the game in our club. In order to continue the growth of the sport, a sound foundation must be laid at the youth level and opportunities must be provided to enjoy the game.

Soccer gives the players the freedom to act as individuals in a team game and to display their skills in a situation unrestricted by physical, social, racial or economic barriers.

It is vital for the adults to become involved as administrators, coaches, referees, linesmen or any other capacity that lends itself to the growth and development of the world's most popular sport.

This manual is intended to outline the direction for the development of our players and to convey the philosophy of the RSC as it regards the player development process. Although this handbook cannot cover, in detail, all aspects of soccer organization and play, it is hopeful that it will encourage development of the truly great global game within our club and stimulate a desire for greater knowledge of it. We hope that you will join with us in our quest for the development of soccer in the Roswell Soccer Club.

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## Our Vision

Our vision within the RSC is to develop, assist and support every Roswell Soccer Club player in achieving his or her full potential as a young athlete, both on and off the field.

## Our Mission

Our mission within the RSC is to educate our players, coaches, trainers and parents in the sport of soccer, using the Roswell Soccer Club program curriculum that is completely focused on player development.

## Program Goals

To implement a complete, standardized training program by the following:

1. Develop players to their full potential both on and off the field.
  - a. Technically
  - b. Tactically
  - c. Physically
  - d. Psychologically
  - e. Academically
2. Provide quality coaching and training staff
3. Educate coaches, trainers, parents and players on the importance of development first and winning second
4. Seek higher competition for further development. Winning and, therefore, promotions will be a by-product of the development being accomplished at the Roswell Soccer Club.

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## Program Standards

To be true to our goals, our standards must reflect the commitment and dedication necessary to carry out our mission. The following rules set the standards of the Roswell Soccer Club for the implementation of our player development curriculum:

1. Coaches and trainers will follow specific curriculum guidelines outlined in this manual for each age group. The Roswell Soccer Club Director of Coaching and the Director's Coaching Committee is charged with the responsibility of assuring that the coach and/ or trainer is knowledgeable of the specific curriculum for their age group. This body will assist the coach and trainer wherever possible to see that the goals of the curriculum are achieved.
2. Trainers will be assigned specific age groups and/ or teams based on player and team needs and consistent with the trainer's experience and capabilities. The Director of Coaching and the Coaching Committee will provide the final assignment duty and approval.
3. Players, coaches and trainers evaluations will take place initially and regularly. The Roswell Soccer Club is seeking to form long term relationships with the highest quality coaches and trainers. These evaluations will take place at least each season unless the Director of Coaching and his/her Coaching Committee deems measurement that is more frequent necessary.
4. This is not meant as a policing action but is intended to assist the trainer in becoming aware of how they are performing about achieving the goals of the player development curriculum.
5. Assignment terms for coaches, trainers and teams will be evaluated regularly for development, performance and improvement. The Roswell Soccer Club does not intend to set defined term limits for its coaches and trainers and understands that there are situations that evolve where a long term relationship between a team and its coach or trainer is advantageous. The club, however, stress the importance of continual progress and the need to introduce new ideas to the team for proper development.
6. The Director of Coaching and his/her Coaching Committee will regularly assess whether that progress is occurring at an appropriate pace and terms will reflect that progress.
7. The Club must perform a Confidential Background Check on all the club's coaches and trainers. It is important to assure the integrity of all our program staff and the protection of our children. This background check will be performed annually.
8. All programs will be implemented simultaneously.

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## Coaching Requirements

### Education

Player's development and their ability to expand their range of skill and its application on the field of play is highly influenced by the coach's knowledge, and understanding of how to convey the principles of soccer. The coaches must be proficient in their knowledge of the game as well as demonstrate the desire to continue to expand their knowledge and teaching ability through continuing education. Knowledge without the ability to communicate is valueless. The coaches must continue to develop their skill in communicating their knowledge to the players.

The RSC, in its commitment to excellence, requires that all coaches have a USSF coaching license, or the equivalent, and that select coaches have the equivalent of a USSF "C" license. The club has established a continuing education program to allow for this. The purpose of this program is simple. That is, to encourage coaches, that have acquired their USSF "D" license, to attend national courses and clinics to further expand their knowledge.

The Director of Coaching and the Coaching Committee will have the authority to make allowances for exceptional candidates. The club, in its effort to achieve these requirements, will sponsor and administer licensing courses and clinics for its coaches.

### Coaching Assignments

The Director of Coaching and the Coaching Committee will determine the assignment of coaches to their respective teams. The team's age group and current level of play will influence the coaching assignment decision.

The club believes that it is important to have talented soccer coaching at all age groups and levels but the coach's style of teaching may fit some age groups or levels of play better than others do. The development of the player and his/her team is the final determining factor in each assignment.

### Metrics

It is important for the development of the coach that they receive regular comments so they can grow in their skills. It is the club's wish that its coaching staff, including trainers, should be open to constructive criticism for the benefit of the coach and the players under their guidance.

The coach must be able to implement the program curriculum for their team's age group. The club will review, through contact or observation, the progress being made toward this goal. If the club determines that the team and its players are falling short of the Curriculum's objectives, the coach may benefit from the assistance of the other members of the coaching staff.

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The coach is encouraged to seek assistance for all or any part of their responsibilities to insure steady progress in the development of the players.

In some instances, it may be desirable for a coach to forge a relationship with a more experienced coach or trainer who can mentor them in some or any aspect of the role of the coach. The Coaching Committee will serve as a ready resource for the coach in identifying an appropriate mentor.

The club feels that it is extremely valuable for players and coaches to view recent or past playing experiences. Filming of matches is an essential coaching and developmental tool, which can not be ignored. If a coach has the resources, these films can give the coach and trainer a true assessment of the player's status of game day ability. This can also be used to show a player his/her strengths and weaknesses. As the old Chinese proverb says, "A picture is worth a thousand words."

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## Trainer Requirements

### **Selection**

The Director of Coaching and Coaching Committee will appoint the trainers for the club. The Coaching Committee will consist of RSC coaches and trainers including the Director of Coaching and the Assistant Directors of Coaching of the boys and girls side of the program.

### **Education**

As our goal is to educate and develop our youth players to reach their full potential, we as the Roswell Soccer Club will encourage, help, educate and further develop a standard for the club trainers to adhere to.

The licensing and education requirements for our trainers will essentially follow the standards set forth for our coaches. The trainers will be required to obtain a USSF "C" license or the equivalent. The Director of Coaching will issue final approval on a trainer's qualification. Trainers may be required, at the discretion of the Director of Coaching, to perform an evaluation. The evaluation process should not hinder the final decision on a trainer assignment; however, the objective of this session is essential for the identification of qualified individuals who will ultimately deliver the successful implementation of the player development curriculum.

### **Team Assignments**

The trainers' appointment to their teams will be based on the team's needs as well as the trainer's skills and abilities. Additionally, his/her past experiences and past performances will serve to identify the appropriate matching of teams and trainers.

### **Compensation**

The trainers will be contracted for the year with their respective teams. The trainers will be expected to abide by the terms and conditions of the Roswell Soccer Club Trainers' Agreement. The Roswell Soccer Club Board of Directors will establish the pay scale for the trainers.

The Director of Coaching and the Coaching Committee will recommend a pay level within the approved pay scale commensurate with the trainer's ability. His/her past youth coaching and training experience will be considered a plus for purposes of determining the trainer's pay level.

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## Programs and Curriculum

The programs and training curriculum for the Roswell Soccer Club is geared for the youth player from the U6 age group through the U19 levels.

### **Roswell Soccer Academy**

The purpose of the Roswell Soccer Academy is to give the beginner soccer player the needed fundamentals necessary to properly play and enjoy the game. The Academy will also help identify young players who have demonstrated natural potential to further develop and be educated in the more challenging principles of soccer. The Academy consists of 2 stages of development.

**Stage I (FUNdamental Stage)** - Jr. Academy; will be a unisex group ages 6 - 9. The overall objectives and goals for the Jr. Academy are for the youngsters to have fun while developing sound fundamentals and movements. This phase of development is an introduction to the Academy skills and training curriculum.

**Stage II (The Learning to Train Stage)** - Academy; U10 - U12 age groups will be the next phase of development where girls and boys are separated into groups and teams. The development process will continue at this age group, as the objectives will be geared towards specific and specialized skill movements. Players are challenged to compete against other Academy teams with the understanding that player development remains our number one priority.

### **Roswell Soccer Play**

The Roswell Soccer Program, beyond the Academy, consists of both Recreational and Select playing levels, both girls and boys, age U – 6 through U – 19. In the Select program, there is play at every age level, while the Recreational program progresses by even years but includes U – 19.

The age brackets are as follows:

- ◆ U – 10    Recreation and Select
- ◆ U – 11    Select only
- ◆ U – 12    Recreation and Select
- ◆ U – 13    Select only
- ◆ U – 14    Recreation and Select
- ◆ U – 15    Select only
- ◆ U – 16    Recreation and Select
- ◆ U – 17    Select only
- ◆ U – 18    Team formed for State Cup only
- ◆ U – 19    Recreation and Select

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## Main Objectives

The Roswell Soccer Curriculum consists of age appropriate training standards and methods carried out by certified coaches and trainers. The training priorities and goals for the corresponding age groups are as follows:

- ◆ **U12 - U14 (Stage III - Training to Train)** – Development of individual skills, individual and group tactics. The dynamic training environment of small sided games develops technical speed under pressure of time, space and opponent. Practices focus on 60% technical/tactical/fitness training and 40% competition.
- ◆ **U14 - U16 (Stage IV - Training to Compete)** – Small sided games will be used to train the roles and functions of players emphasizing technical and tactical speed (decision making) By applying some tactical or technical restrictions in a competitive environment the players level of concentration and decision making increases . Time focus on 50% of technical/tactical/fitness training and 50% competition and competition-specific training.
- ◆ **U16 – U19 (Stage V - Training to Win)** - The final phase of athletic preparation requires full game knowledge in positional and team play. Players continue to develop mastery technically and tactically as the functional training of the three blocks in the team continues. The fitness component becomes more of a factor at this age group.

The concept of winning and successful tactical play will be a consequence of patient technical development.

This long term process takes time and requires proper guidance and direction from quality knowledgeable coaches. Over emphasis on winning and skipping phases of soccer education can be detrimental to a player's development, enjoyment and success.

Any information a child receives must go through a proper learning process provided by their coach. This process has four major phases and the coach must have a solid understanding of each.

- ◆ **Phase One:** Introduction of the Fundamentals.
  - ◆ The coach must be enthusiastic and give lots of encouragement.
  - ◆ Equal playing time and rotation of positions far outweighs concerns about wins and losses
  - ◆ Playing with the players is also encouraged while maintaining a secure and safe environment
  - ◆ Must know the rules of the game and encourage sportsmanship

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- ◆ **Phase Two: Repetition**
  - ◆ Experience through repetition without pressure initially and progressing to low intensity pressure with frequent explanations, demonstrations and corrections
  - ◆ The coach must be enthusiastic, passionate and have a broader understanding of the rules of the game
  - ◆ Must be a role model to and identify with high level players and instill imagination and passion for the game
  - ◆ Seeking out soccer education should take place in an effort to build soccer awareness and sensitivity to players needs
  - ◆ The focus should be on development and respect for the game not wins and losses
  - ◆ For the player to compete and succeed, attention on learning by doing in match related situations while being disciplined and positive must be established by the coach
  
- ◆ **Phase Three: Formidable Years**
  - ◆ The coach must possess a strong personality, soccer knowledge and sound ability to demonstrate
  - ◆ Progress playing environment to match conditions and technical functional training.
  - ◆ Must increase the pressure to perform and develop mental toughness, concentration and diligence.
  - ◆ Understanding and explaining the likelihood of frequent mistakes by emphasizing the experience as a normal part of the learning process.
  - ◆ Training loads should be increased and adult standards met when principles of play are introduced (accountability)
  - ◆ The coach must be a disciplinarian and team leader during this crucial time of development
  
- ◆ **Phase Four: Competitive Demands**
  - ◆ A “no doubt who is in charge” attitude that places higher demands in training sessions and matches are a must by well informed experienced coaches.
  - ◆ A charismatic disciplinarian with managerial know how articulates that the fulfillment of a players potential depends on his or her own efforts, the support of his/her teammates and the unselfish guidance of their coach
  - ◆ Can observe and identify problems through match analysis; Cycle of development consists of Game (performance), Analysis (evaluation), Training (education) and Game (performance)
  - ◆ Must have a sound understanding of the games principles, and concepts
  - ◆ Educate players in technical/tactical functional training sessions
  - ◆ Monitor players ability to cope emotionally when confronted with pressure situations
  - ◆ Coaches must be able to identify the best way to approach and positively influence each one of his/her players

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## Program Curriculum: U6 - U10

The basic premise of the curriculum for this age group is to develop a sound foundation of ball control while helping the players learn to enjoy the game of soccer. This is accomplished by maximizing touches on the ball with varied repetition of basic skills in fun games and exercises. These skills include, but are not limited to, dribbling, passing, and trapping. Heading should not be encouraged for the younger age groups.

The responsibility of the coach will be to organize fun practice sessions, which incorporate exercises to develop coordination, agility and speed of reaction with and without the ball.

It is important from the very beginning that the player's development must start with acquiring the skill to control the ball. The ball is by far the biggest challenge for this age and skill level player. As the players get more comfortable with the basic techniques their level of enjoyment will increase.

All practice sessions should begin with basic ball work using all foot surfaces and fundamental motor skills without the ball (running). They must receive frequent but short rests. Moving forward the kids should play a series of fun games where there are loose boundaries, no eliminations, and lots of encouragement to dribble, pass and trap the ball.

These games should be changed every 10 minutes. All practices should end with small sided team games such as 1 v 1, 2 v 2, 3 v 3, 4 v 4, etc.)

Rotation of positions, movement in the correct direction to defend and attack, and moving up and down the field as a small group are managed. The players must be made to understand that winning is not important and should play on a different team ever 5-10 minutes.

The goalkeeping position is not introduced until the U10 age of play. In the modern game of soccer, the keeper is a highly skilled field player capable of full field play with both feet. As the players reach ages 9 and 10, basic skills such as catching (in the air and on the ground), punting, throwing and taking goal kicks will be introduced. Kids in this age bracket will be challenged by their physical development. This affects their reaction time which, in turn, slows and prevents their continued skill development.

Supervised speed and agility training with and without the ball will minimize coordination problems and enhance skill development. It is important that the coaches and trainers use only age appropriate exercises until the player's older years.

It is understood that there will be a small group of U9 boys and girls selected for the Roswell Soccer Academy's developmental program. It is important that everyone be aware that the same skills and emphasis will be used for all players in the U6 through U10 age groups.

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## Program Curriculum: U10 - U12

This age group continues to focus on technical education and proficiency. Specialized skill movements should be incorporated and emphasized throughout the entire practice. Maximum repetitions should be the focus for these players as they are still at an early development stage. Training should always be in dynamic settings. In this age group, we will continue the sound foundation of skill development that was established in the U6 through U10 ages.

### **Technical Emphasis:**

The players' technical skill development in this age group will continue with and without pressure. One of the goals is to develop our younger players to be technically superior on the field of play.

The technical skills to be focused on this area are as follows:

- ◆ Ball Juggling - 100 juggles is a sign of mastery (use all body parts and encourage feet more than other body parts)
- ◆ Dribbling - encourage risk taking and dribbling at players with fast footwork, fakes and fakes
- ◆ First Touch - all surfaces and on the move away from pressure, and turns
- ◆ Shooting - proper striking technique shooting from all angles, 1<sup>st</sup> touch preparation to strike and attitude to score (beat the goalkeeper)
- ◆ Passing – all surfaces and on the move. Proper timing, weight, accuracy and disguise. (master techniques such as inside of the foot before introducing new techniques) HIGHLY IMPORTANT
- ◆ Heading – beginning to incorporate the head in attack and defense

All the above would require the player to perform efficiently with both feet. Our goal in the RSC is to have all our players use both feet equally well but there are exceptions to this concept. Improving and developing the above skills will further enhance the players' ball control as well as his or her confidence. Application of these skills should be both with and without pressure.

### **Tactical Emphasis:**

At this age group, we want to focus on the introduction of the basic principles of play. By using the progression of small-sided match-ups starting with 1 v 1 to 4 v 4, the players will be taught concepts of attacking, transition and defending. Through the small sided games the emphasis of attacking and defending in small groups will improve improvisation, anticipation and off the ball movement for all players. By putting them in live game related activities players are forced to solve soccer problems by

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solving soccer problems. The game becomes the teacher and the coach becomes the guide.

**The principles of play to be taught are as follows:** Attacking and Defending

The basic principles of play are:

1. **Attack** - Penetrate, support, mobility, creating depth and width
2. **Defense** - pressure, cover, balance, and compactness

◆ **Attacking:**

- ◆ 1 v 1 – Take players on. Beating an opponent by being creative and taking risks. Shielding
- ◆ 2 v 1 - Attacking at speed looking to penetrate with either a dribble, pass or run. Providing quality support, distance and combination plays.
- ◆ 2 v 2 through 4 v 4- Keeping possession using ball skill looking to find the right moment to penetrate defense. Finding supporting positions, passing lanes and angles require movement and mobility of players with and without the ball. Creating depth and width.

◆ **Defense**

- ◆ 1 v 1 – Apply immediate chase and pressure on the ball with intent to win the ball, delay attack, force to one side. Apply pressure from the front and behind. Knowing how and when to tackle.
- ◆ 2 v 1 – Pressuring ball to one side and close down passing lane. Delay attack by jockeying. Use of head and body fakes to force mistakes on attackers.
- ◆ 2 v 2 through 4 v 4 – Apply pressure, cover and balance. Deny penetration by staying compact. Mark closest most dangerous attacker

## **Observation**

The tactical education and insight of our players begins with their technical proficiency first and foremost. The universal concepts will be applied efficiently when they have a solid technical foundation and understanding of these principles. The players must master these concepts before any advanced tactics can be introduced.

As everyone knows, the game is the greatest teacher. The ability of the coach to recognize and analyze its team's strengths and weaknesses during the match affords the opportunity to evaluate the effectiveness of the training sessions.

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Every coach must develop the knowledge to construct appropriate future training sessions to best fit and further develop the team to achieve his or her goals. By focusing your observation on either attack or defense you will be given a focused understanding of what needs to be worked on for your team. Once a particular problem is solved new problems will arise. This is an indication that it's time to move on.

Example: I have been working on 1 v 1 defending and my attackers no longer can beat their opponent. It's time to help your attackers penetrate.

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## Program Curriculum: U12 - U16

The goal for this level and age group is the execution of all technical and tactical skills in game conditions. In order for players to transfer learning into the game, they need to know and understand their tasks and functions per position. Each player is encouraged to learn and execute the technical and tactical functions of the defender, midfielder and striker positions. As players get to the older stages of this period of development they will learn about the thirds of the field and their relation to the “three blocks”. These are described as Defensive, Midfield and Attacking blocks.

It is also important for the coach to include the goalkeeper in training sessions and functional exercises.

*Emphasis:* Here are some important factors to take into consideration during this period of development. Training sessions should include 1 v 1, 2 v 2, 3 v 3 and progress to 7 v 7 and 8 v 8 games.

- Team shape and formation (4-4-2, 3-5-2, 4-3-3 etc.)
- Techniques and functions per position
- Principles of play (attack, defense and transition)
- Direct or indirect style of play
- Movement off the ball per position
- Risks on thirds of the field (defensive, middle and attacking thirds)
- Communication

**Characteristics of the Defender-** Must be strong, fast, sound technically, does not take risks, good tackling and heading ability. Can time tackles well, determined to recover and is patient, has good vision of the field and communicates well. Excellent at clearing the ball on crosses, set plays, corner kicks and direct play. They should be tough to beat one on one and use supporting teammates and lines as extra defenders. Understands his/her role individually and the defensive block collectively to maintain compact shape, ball side goal side defending, especially in transition and man to man and zonal marking. These are the essential ingredients to good defending.

**Attacking techniques of the Defender;** Can execute long and short passes, directional heading, and switching the point of attack. Good at shielding, trapping and dribbling out of pressure to pass. Look to build up attack and support midfield and attackers.

**Characteristics of the Midfielder-** on attack must be quick and flexible with and without the ball. Possess high level of ball skills, receiving, passing techniques, shielding, dribbling and crossing. Can beat players one on one and look to combine

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with backs, midfielders and forwards. They are allowed to take risks depending on third of the field. Have excellent insight into small sided games within the game. Keep possession, switch the point of attack and dictate speed of play with their vision and intelligence. Make penetrating runs, look to find the ball and have ability to work in tight spaces. They are quick in transition from attack to defense and defense to attack.

Defensively they apply pressure in front, from the side and from behind. Win defensive headers, poke checking and work in a solid block between attackers and defenders. Track back immediately when a ball is penetrated through or over their block. Organize the strikers in defense.

**Technical skills of the Midfielder;** Excellent passing techniques, driving balls, short and long passes flicks and deception. Shielding, dribbling out of pressure, receiving facing away and to the field. Look for combination play with one and two touch. Possess the ability to receive balls with all body parts and switch point of attack. Can shoot, cross, and work to link with attackers.

**Characteristics of the Attacker-** Love to score goals. Can shoot with all surfaces, inside and outside of foot, toe, head and whatever is necessary to score. They are excellent at one on ones with moves, fakes, fast footwork, fakes and deception. Possesses good instincts, positioning and has aggressive nature to go forward. They look to receive the balls with their back to goal, on the turn or in space. Have excellent shielding ability. A good attacker is highly creative and deceptive. Link up attacks with second attacker and midfielders with combination play. Excellent at volleys, half-volleys, side volleys and capitalize on defensive mistakes.

They have a limited but important role defensively. Channel attacks to a side and look to nip square passes, capitalize on poorly trapped balls, and apply back pressure (pressure from behind). They also look to apply pressure on back passes to the keeper.

**Attacking techniques of the Attacker;** Ability to turn, shield and lay off passes. Shoot with shoe laces, inside outside, and toe. Time runs well in the box on crosses, penetrating passes and combination play. Flick balls on with their head and redirect crosses. Side volleys half volleys, full volleys. Have an excellent first touch to set up scoring opportunities. Possess a wide range of skills, fakes and fakes to beat opponents one on one at speed.

**Fitness and conditioning begin to take shape at this stage of development. Please note that from 12-16 the players fit into two stages of development. They are the Training to Train stage and the Training to Compete stage. (See description on page 8)**

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**Objectives of Training to Train stage:** To build the aerobic base, build strength towards the end of the phase and continue to develop with soccer specific exercises. Skills should be coupled with strength and speed. Due to sudden growth spurts keep in mind agility, balance, coordination and flexibility exercise.

**Objectives of the Training to Compete stage:** Optimize fitness preparation for the individual soccer player in relation to his/her position. Include specific skills and movements to maximize performance. Half of your training session can be devoted towards technical/tactical skills in relation to fitness. While the other half is devoted to competitive games and competition specific training.

Please note that it is encouraged to begin slowly in the beginning of your season and increase the intensity as the season and your teams' level of fitness develop. Begin fitness training at a 3:1 ratio and improve 2:1 and 1:1 ratio to maximize intensity.

**Recovery training-** Players within the U12 - U16 age group should be exposed to a warm-up, stretch and cool down, stretch routine in practice and games. It's recommended to do dynamic stretching before games. Basically this is stretching with movement. Static stretching should only occur at the end of practice and games. By tapering your training session from low-high-low intensity you will also reduce the risk of injury.

Tournaments and competition begin to be apart of a players development. It's important to learn how to travel effectively, how to compete at a high level and to represent the team as ambassadors for the club. As a supplement to the training and development that occurs during the regular season, the tournaments, preseason, in season and postseason, provide further opportunity for match experience.

Additionally, these are periods to develop camaraderie and chemistry, provide exposure for the player and the club and to give a measurement of development. Choose your tournaments according to skill level, time of year, commitment level and resources. Please note that too many tournaments can be detrimental to player development. Some countries put restrictions on the number of games they allow a youth soccer player to play in order to reduce "burnout".

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## Program Curriculum: U16 - U19

Technical and tactical training will be continued to a more advanced level for these players while beginning to focus on the player's function in his/her block as it relates to the teams tactics. By this time, the player is settling into identifiable positions on the field and can carry out specific tasks in their position. The age group will spend more time learning to consistently execute the responsibilities of their position and block while applying tactical applications in the 11 v 11 setting.

More time is spent on intensive tactical planning. This process is clearly mapped out by the following; Game-Analysis-Training-Game.

### **What is Coaching?**

#### **Learning to Coach: (Five Phases)**

1. A coach must have knowledge and understanding of the game
2. Ability to read the game
3. Determine objectives
4. Set Priorities
5. Plan

In addition the coach must:

- Identify problems in priority of importance
- Ask the question, did the training sessions have positive effect on the team during games?

The game presents many difficulties that players need to overcome. Since players need to constantly make choices in response to situations, it's vital to fully understand and recognize these difficulties.

- The ball
- The opponents
- Teammates
- Rules
- Objectives
- Stress
- Time
- Space

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Keeping these difficulties in mind, training sessions progress from technical functional training to technical tactical functional training. In simple terms the technique and tactics per position as it relates to the team tactics in the 11 v 11 team game.

The teams must learn and adapt to a system of play that best suits the players' talents and the team's overall makeup. The style of the team's play will be governed by the best tendencies of your players while using tactical planning to adjust the style to overcome the strengths and take advantage of the weaknesses of the upcoming opponent.

The coach must understand and train the following tactical concepts.

**High Pressure and Pressing Defensively** - Immediate chase, force ball to specific areas high up on the field, man to man marking, double teaming, timing of pressure, intent to win the ball.

**Low Pressure Defending** - Low pressure defending does not refer to the amount of pressure on the ball but rather where the defending team sets a line of confrontation. Keep in mind climate, field conditions, both teams' abilities, importance of game and situations.

The ability to identify and adapt to high pressure and low-pressure situations as well as applying them at the appropriate stages of a match is a requisite objective of solid play. In addition, the concepts of man to man and zonal defending will be introduced, taught and applied.

The tactical emphasis for this age group will be focused on developing techniques that effectively influence the speed of the game. The players must execute skills and decision making under the pressures of the game such as; physical speed and fitness, technical speed, tactical speed and psychological speed. Tactical implication of technique requires a quality first touch, early support, transition, vision, communication, accuracy and timing of passes. The following is a list of tactical concepts.

Zone defending, man to man marking, counter attack, offside tactics, beating offside tactics, delaying the game, substitutions, tactical adjustments, set pieces, systems of play 3-5-2, 3-4-3, 4-4-2 etc..

The educated and skilled player will want to apply their abilities at these ages in the most advantageous system depending on the makeup of their side and the strengths and/ or weaknesses of their opponents. The club will encourage the players to become familiar with different systems of play. The players should understand their roles and positions within the 4-4-2, 4-3-3, 3-4-3, 3-5-2, 4-5-1, etc.

The coach/ trainer should be educating their players on the appropriate strategies for goal up or goal down situations. How do you respond to each and what changes to

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your present system are required to maximize the opportunity for success? The player at this age and level of play should be able to recognize changes in the game's situations and help his/her team adjust during the play.

Fitness and speed training as well as functional training will become very important at this age. The top select players must concentrate on building and maintaining an optimum fitness-training regimen. For the most competitive travel teams, this will require more than two practices per week. The team members, parents, and coaches/trainers should plan around a two - three practice a week schedule with additional personal training in between.

In this age group, coaches will have identified players' abilities, strengths and positions in the field where the players feel more comfortable and are effective, to continue individual and team development

It is important for all Roswell teams to establish a format of practice, which patterns the development cycle of match-analysis-training-match. The training will build on past and expected playing experiences. The play will show the coach/ trainer and players the effectiveness of the training while evaluation will give the coach/ trainer the opportunity to establish priorities for the next training sessions.

To further develop the execution phase at this age, shadow training as well as set plays will be practiced frequently. The players should develop full awareness and understanding of the importance and the effect of their speed of play as well as their speed in transition. Training sessions must be geared toward putting the player in manipulated environments to challenge their ability to cope with different tactics, tasks and situations. Player will become aware of their individual and group performance in this competitive setting as it relates to the objectives set forth by the coach.

Tournaments and high level competition now take on a new perspective. In addition to the benefits of tournaments previously mentioned, this age and level of play require high volumes of competition in order to maintain and further develop the level of play. The exposure of the players, the team and the club is enhanced by the success of the team. Our player development cycle will begin with preseason training tested by preseason tournaments, continued through seasonal play, complimented by in season and post season competition.

The select teams at this level are comprised of players who may have aspirations beyond high school competition. The club will encourage these teams to enter the most competitive levels of tournaments and should seek to gain invitation to the country's premier tournaments. This will give the players the opportunity to fully execute their skills and high level of playing ability while being showcased to college coaches.

## Conclusion

This player development curriculum was designed to provide our players, parents, and coaches with the knowledge and understanding of long term player development standards, methods and techniques. In no way can this or any player development curriculum cover all there is to know and learn about soccer. It is our hope however to continue to create an environment that will help our young talented players in reaching their full potential as young men and women both on the field and off.

That being said it's important to realize that the Roswell Soccer Club can only provide each player with 50% of their development and education. As each player grows and develops they will be faced with many different and difficult challenges. If they have the dedication and desire to be the best, they must be responsible for their own improvement. Practicing with a team two or even three times a week can only take them so far. To become the best you can be requires hard work, self-responsibility, and self-discipline. Each player must take control of their development and have a willingness to improve on his/her own.

**Remember the ball is at YOUR feet.**