

SPI's PYRAMID TRAINING METHODOLOGY (PTM)

As coaches and trainers, we all take calculated steps in teaching youth soccer players. These “steps” are what constitute a methodology. Every training session should have a goal; an objective to aim for.

The PTM™ provides coaches with an orderly and regulated method of planning a youth training session. It allows them to mentally visualize a training session, with skills and technique as the base. Skills and corresponding techniques should be clearly explained and demonstrated. Players should also be given the opportunity to “rehearse” them as they warm-up.

The concept of stretching may be foreign to most youth players. Still, reports and studies coming out of world-renowned soccer schools speak of the benefits of stretching – to both the physiological and psychological sides – for youth players. At the youth level (U-9 and under) the concept is as important as the stretching technique. Dedicate five minutes of your session talking to your players about the importance of proper warm-up and stretching technique.

Two drills are pre-planned and demonstrated. Keep the playing area small and compact. This will allow you to observe and intervene when necessary. Again, the drill should be explained and demonstrated. Be flexible and prepared to adjust the drill as necessary. Some players may find certain drills more challenging than others, therefore be prepared to spend extra time explaining and demonstrating one-on-one. Realize that at the youth level the biggest obstacle is controlling the ball. The addition of other obstacles such as cones and flags should only be added when all players have demonstrated a basic understanding and execution of the exercise.

The “top of the pyramid” is a goal all youth players want to reach – to PLAY! Playing soccer should be left for the end of the session and restricted. By restricted we mean, all aspects and rules of the game should be clearly explained to players before they begin. The “anything goes” concept of playing becomes a waste of time and for many players, an exercise in frustration. The size of the pitch, number of touches, etc. are best explained before the first touch is made. Keep games small-sided (4 vs. 4 or 5 vs. 5) this will allow maximum touches on the ball by all players.

Once the game begins let them play. Stay close to the field and make mental notes for the next training session. Stop the game as little as possible, sit back and enjoy!

By now most of us coaches and trainers know there is no “easy solution” manual when it comes to training/coaching kids. The keys seem to be knowledge and flexibility. The more you know, the easier it is to adjust.

Always remember to be encouraging and optimistic with your players – you truly are developing the future!