



U . S . S O C C E R F E D E R A T I O N
**PLAYER DEVELOPMENT
FRAMEWORK**

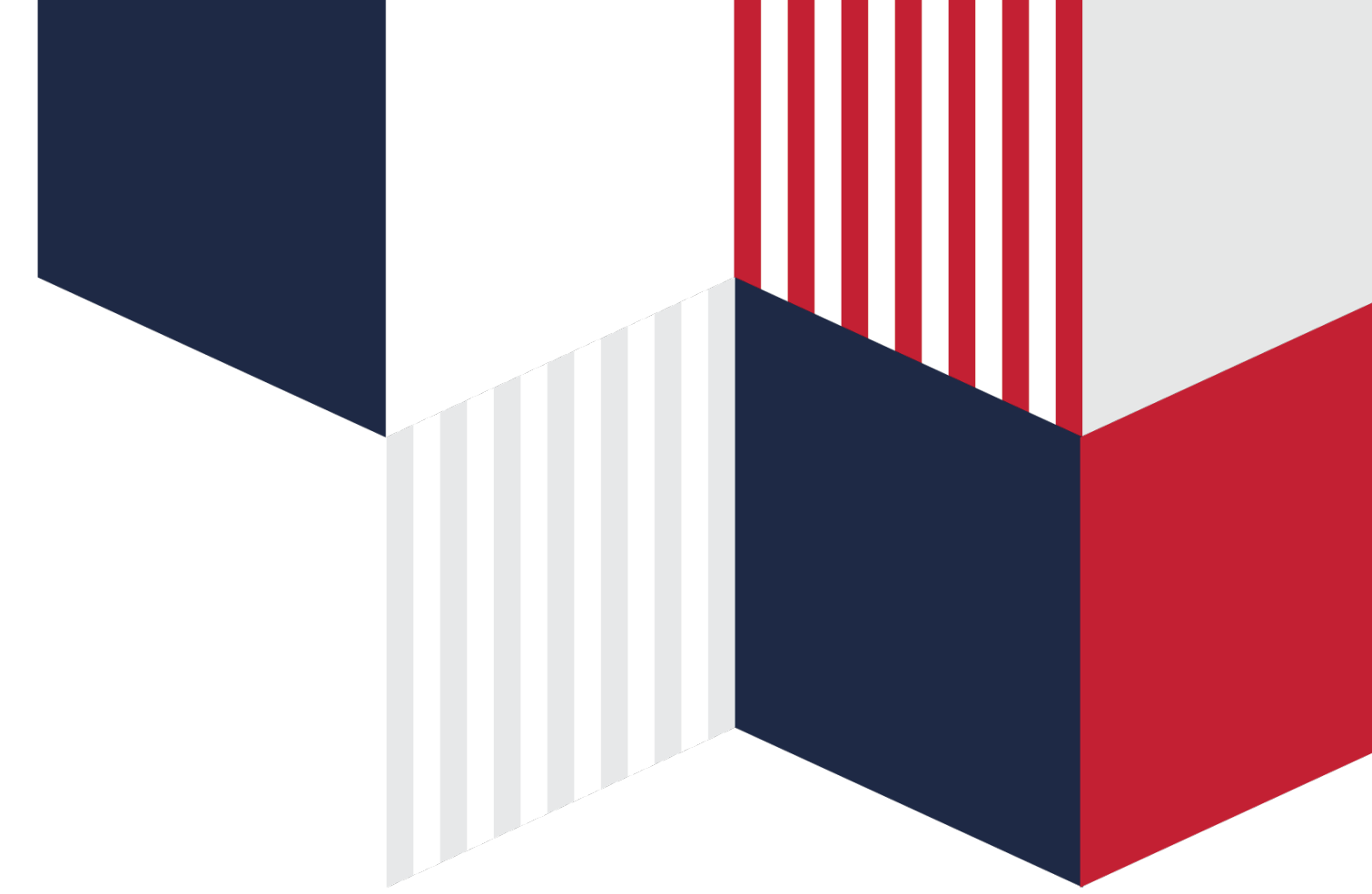
4V4

U7 - U8 LEARNING PLAN



U.S. SOCCER FEDERATION - TECHNICAL PLAN

PLAYER-CENTERED



WHO IS IN FRONT OF US?

A PLAYER-CENTERED APPROACH TO PLAYING THE GAME
FOCUS ON CREATING A DEVELOPMENTALLY APPROPRIATE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

DEVELOPMENTAL STAGE: MIDDLE CHILDHOOD

B-U5	B-U6	B-U7	B-U8	B-U9	B-U10	B-U11	B-U12	B-U13	B-U14	B-U15	B-U16	B-U17	B-U18	
G-U5	G-U6	G-U7	G-U8	G-U9	G-U10	G-U11	G-U12	G-U13	G-U14	G-U15	G-U16	G-U17	G-U18	
U7	SOCIAL CHARACTERISTICS			EMOTIONAL CHARACTERISTICS			LANGUAGE CHARACTERISTICS			COGNITIVE CHARACTERISTICS			PHYSICAL CHARACTERISTICS	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Start to show more independence from parents and coaches Place more importance/value on friendship and enjoy being a part of groups Begin to develop a sense of loyalty to groups, enjoy belonging, and having a best friend Able to work with and help other players Begin to understand social norms and team rules More conscious of fair play and respect for others Become opinionated and learn to voice opinions 			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased self-awareness (ego) Self-confidence and self-esteem are fragile Extremely sensitive to opinions of others Can be very self-critical Can be jealous of others Have difficulty in understanding the impact of their actions and behaviors on others 			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Language becomes more mature and complex (e.g., use metaphors) Able to have conversations and fit language to the situation Can understand how to use a word (concept) by being told the definition Understand words have multiple meanings Can better articulate questions Able to articulate their emotions and express themselves Can begin to respond to low-order questions 			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continuing to develop the concept of time and space relationship Can count and understand the concept of scoring Able to focus for longer periods and use their cognitive abilities for a specific purpose Can direct attention to a variety of stimuli (multiple things at once) Beginning to think logically and understand cause and effect to be able to problem solve Beginning to categorize knowledge (things are similar or different) Able to connect present to past and future, but still have a short-term view on potential consequences Can plan and carry out basic projects with adult support. Becoming more self-directed in activities Learn from each other 			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Steady growth from age 6 to the onset of the adolescent growth spurt (avg. 5 cm or 2 inches per year) Continued development of both fine and gross motor movements Increasing ability to optimize movement in all directions (agility) Higher ability to coordinate full body movements Greater ability to develop rhythmic movement Improved ability to recognize and respond quickly to sensory (visual, auditory, tactile) stimuli Continued development of endurance 	
U8														

FOUNDATION PHASE I

SCANNING, RECEIVING, DRIBBLING, SHORT PASSING AND SHOOTING

GOALS

- Players develop scanning skills (ME AND MY SCANNING SKILLS)
- Players develop fundamental movement skills (ME AND MY MOVEMENT SKILLS)
- Players develop fundamental soccer skills with and without the ball (ME AND THE BALL)
- Players are introduced to cooperative, low structured team play (ME AND MY TEAMMATES)

LEARNING ENVIRONMENT: OBJECTIVES

- To develop fundamental movement skills (walking and running, pulling and pushing, bending and twisting, skipping, hopping, leaping, catching and throwing, lifting and carrying, jumping and landing, kicking and dribbling, etc.)
- To develop individual coordinated movements (efficiency, quality, quickness)
- To develop reaction speed and acceleration speed
- To develop spatial awareness (SCANNING) and reduced coordinated movements with teammates
- To play with respect to the rules of the game
- To develop fundamental player actions with a high focus on attacking actions
- To develop the ability to win the ball back
- To introduce and implement team tactical principles
- To develop reflection skills: build self-esteem and self-confidence

LEARNING ENVIRONMENT: ACTIVITIES

- Activities are mostly formed around deliberate PLAY with the ball (one player - one ball)
 - Utilize specific training session goals(player actions / team tactical principles)
- Focus on a spontaneous experience and fun in GAMES (learning through low structured play that allows for players' choice)
 - Understanding your role in attacking and defending
 - Increased decision-making including short passing as an option
- Focus on activities in which players can be successful and score lots of goals
- Utilize small sided games: U7: 1v1, 2v1, 2v2, 3v2, 3v3 - U8: 1v1, 2v1, 2v2, 3v2, 3v3, 4v3, 4v4 (every player is always in situations where they are challenged to make actions to the best of their ability)
- Focus on age-appropriate fundamental movement skills with ball (promoting ball contact)
- Utilize short ball-oriented activities challenging the players' movement focused on power, speed, agility and mobility
- Focus on the development of both feet

LEARNING ENVIRONMENT: COACHING

- Be enthusiastic, animated, FUN, and supportive
- Be well-organized but also adaptable and flexible (games and choice)
- Have an eye for the individual challenges of the players
- Facilitate and guide using key words and key questions:
 - Encourage the players to participate and give their best and have fun
 - Encourage the players on & off the ball to move the ball forward by working together
 - Encourage the players to ask questions and help players think of solutions
 - Encourage creativity and autonomous decision-making (be patient & understanding)
 - Encourage reflection and learning from mistakes (awareness of choice & consequence)
- Use short instructions - limited attention span
 - Use the language of the child & appropriate terminology
 - Provide positive specific praise and simple feedback
- Utilize differentiation: provide appropriate individual challenges
- Build self-esteem and self-confidence to recognize strengths and areas of improvement
- Use multiple brief intervals and breaks
- Help players to apply and respect the rules of the game
- Utilize formations as a structure for development



PLAYER-CENTERED: THE PLAYER

4v4



U7 - U8

SOCIAL

- Start to show more independence from parents and coaches
- Place more importance/value on friendship and enjoy being a part of groups
- Begin to develop a sense of loyalty to groups, enjoy belonging, and having a best friend
- Able to work with and help other players
- Begin to understand social norms and team rules
- More conscious of fair play and respect for others
- Become opinionated and learn to voice opinions

EMOTIONAL

- Increased self-awareness (ego)
- Self-confidence and self-esteem are fragile
- Extremely sensitive to opinions of others
- Can be very self-critical
- Can be jealous of others
- Have difficulty in understanding the impact of their actions and behaviors on others



PLAYER-CENTERED: THE PLAYER

4v4



U7 - U8

COGNITIVE

- Continuing to develop the concept of time and space relationship
- Can count and understand the concept of scoring
- Able to focus for longer periods and use their cognitive abilities for a specific purpose
- Can direct attention to a variety of stimuli (multiple things at once)
- Beginning to think logically and understand cause and effect to be able to problem solve
- Beginning to categorize knowledge (things are similar or different)
- Able to connect present to past and future, but still have a short-term view on potential consequences
- Can plan and carry out basic projects with adult support. Becoming more self-directed in activities
- Learn from each other

LANGUAGE

- Language becomes more mature and complex (e.g., use metaphors)
- Able to have conversations and fit language to the situation
- Can understand how to use a word (concept) by being told the definition
- Understand words have multiple meanings
- Can better articulate questions
- Able to articulate their emotions and express themselves
- Can begin to respond to low-order questions



PLAYER-CENTERED: THE PLAYER

4v4



U7 - U8

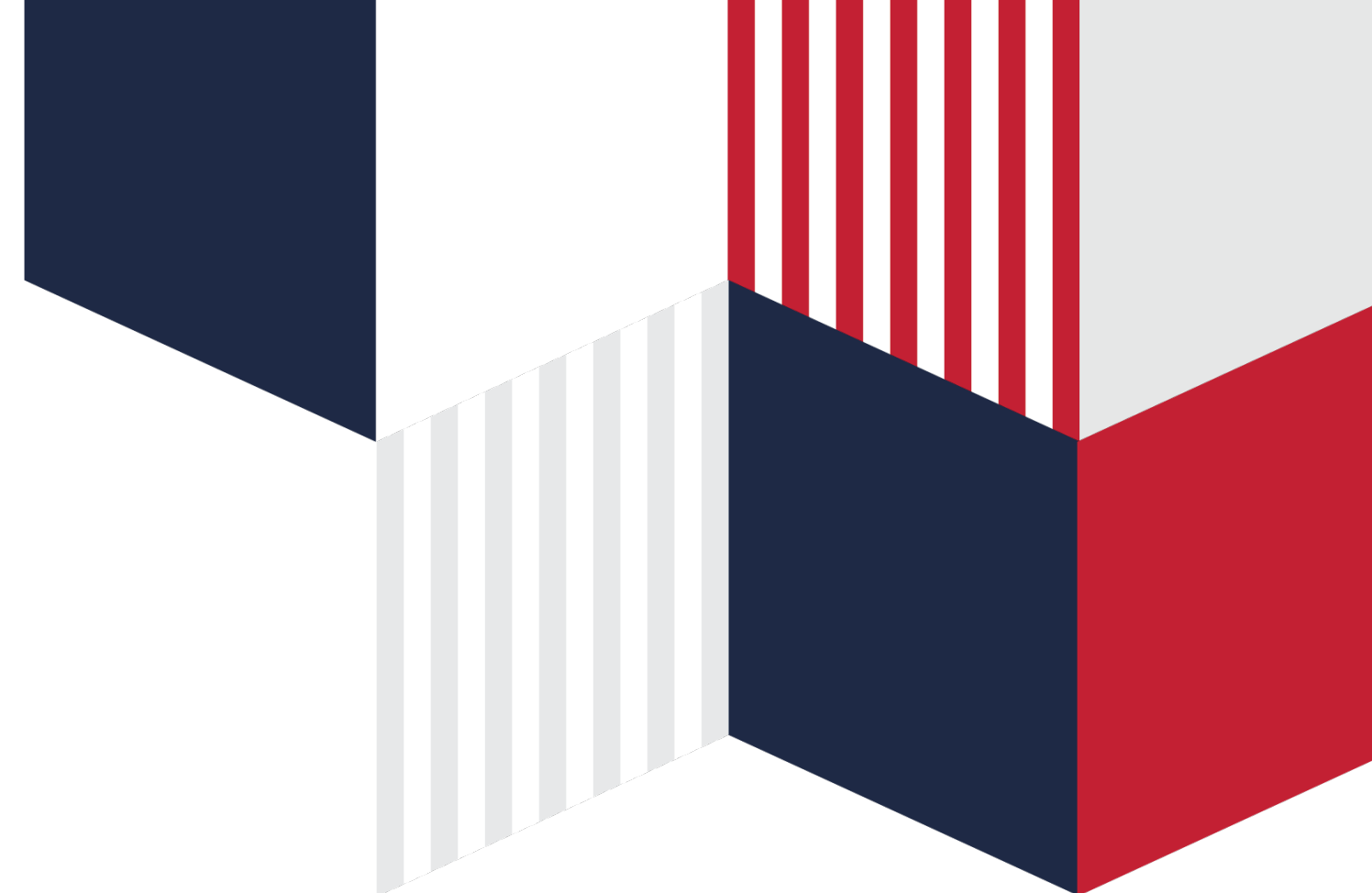
PHYSICAL

- Steady growth from age 6 to the onset of the adolescent growth spurt (avg. 5 cm or 2 inches per year)
- Continued development of both fine and gross motor movements
- Increasing ability to optimize movement in all directions (agility)
- Higher ability to coordinate full body movements
- Greater ability to develop rhythmic movement
- Improved ability to recognize and respond quickly to sensory (visual, auditory, tactile) stimuli
- Continued development of endurance
- Very sensitive to “extreme” temperature



U.S. SOCCER FEDERATION - TECHNICAL PLAN

PLAYER DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK



WHAT CAN WE DEVELOP?

A PLAYER-CENTERED APPROACH TO PLAYING THE GAME

FOCUS ON CREATING A DEVELOPMENTALLY APPROPRIATE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT



PLAYER DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVES

4V4 STANDARDS- GAMES

BALL



Size 3 ball

GOALKEEPER



Not permitted

NO HEADING



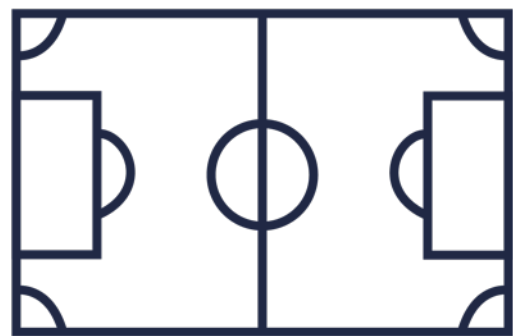
Not permitted

TIME



4 Quarters (no longer than 10 min.)
5 min. break bn quarters

FIELD



25-35 yards (length). 15-25 yards (width). No corner flags needed

SHIN GUARDS



Shin guards Required

PENALTIES



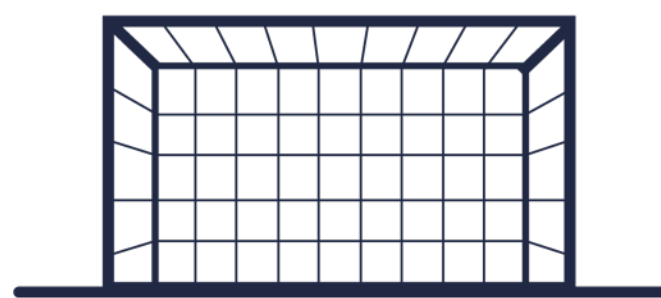
No penalty kicks. No offside

START/RESTART PLAY



Kick offs, free kicks, throw-ins, goal kicks and corner kicks are used to start or restart play

GOALS



Goals should be no larger than 4 feet (height) x 6 feet (width)

REFEREES



Registered referees are not needed at this level (coaches are expected to manage the game environment)

FREE KICKS



If used, all free kicks are indirect. Opponents should be 10 feet away from the ball on all restarts

KICK-IN/DRIBBLE-IN



Kick-ins and/or dribble-ins are also acceptable as restarts when the ball has gone out over the sidelines



PLAYER DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK

4v4



U7 - U8

FOUNDATION PHASE I

SCANNING, RECEIVING, DRIBBLING, SHORT PASSING, AND SHOOTING

Soccer Development

GOALS

- Players develop scanning skills (ME AND MY SCANNING SKILLS)
- Players develop fundamental movement skills (ME AND MY MOVEMENT SKILLS)
- Players develop fundamental soccer skills with and without the ball (ME AND THE BALL)
- Players are introduced to cooperative, low structured team play (ME AND MY TEAMMATES)

Learning objectives

- To develop fundamental movement skills (walking and running, pulling and pushing, bending and twisting, skipping, hopping, leaping, catching and throwing, lifting and carrying, jumping and landing, kicking and dribbling, etc.)
- To develop individual coordinated movements (efficiency, quality, quickness)
- To develop reaction speed and acceleration speed
- To develop spatial awareness (SCANNING) and reduced coordinated movements with teammates
- To play with respect to the rules of the game
- To develop fundamental player actions with a high focus on attacking actions
- To develop the ability to win the ball back
- To introduce and implement team tactical principles
- To develop reflection skills: build self-esteem and self-confidence



THE GAME MOMENTS





PLAYER DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK

4v4



U7 - U8

FOUNDATION PHASE I
SCANNING, RECEIVING, DRIBBLING, SHORT PASSING, AND SHOOTING

ATTACKING	
GAME IDEA	
When we have the ball, we want to play forward through individual actions and short combinations, to play in the attacking half in order to create chances and score goals	
TEAM TACTICAL PRINCIPLES	
MAIN PRINCIPLES	SUB PRINCIPLES
CREATE ATTACKING SHAPE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create height, width, depth
PROVIDE OPTIONS TO PLAY FORWARD	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide a passing option for the player on the ball
BREAK LINES TO ADVANCE ATTACK	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engage opponent: create 1v1
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Find the free player: pass
FINISH THE ATTACK	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Take on 1v1 to create or score
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Finish from the dribble or pass

U7 - U8

FOUNDATION PHASE I

SCANNING, RECEIVING, DRIBBLING, SHORT PASSING AND SHOOTING

ATTACKING

When we have the ball, we want to play forward through individual actions and short combinations, to play in the attacking half in order to create chances and score goals.

TEAM TACTICAL PRINCIPLES

MAIN PRINCIPLES	SUB PRINCIPLES	DEFINITION
CREATE ATTACKING SHAPE <small>POSITION TO CREATE SPACE</small>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Create height, width, depth 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The players off the ball spread out quickly and make the field big, both up and down the field (vertically) and across the field (horizontally). We make the space to defend bigger, which makes it more difficult for the opponent to defend and win the ball back.
PROVIDE OPTIONS TO PLAY FORWARD <small>(RE-)POSITION TO RECEIVE THE BALL</small>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide a passing option for the player on the ball 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Players off the ball scan and move into open space, to provide a passing option. The player receiving the ball will also avoid immediate pressure and have more time and space to make a decision and execute the next play.
BREAK LINES TO ADVANCE ATTACK <small>PLAY THE BALL FORWARD</small>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engage opponent: create 1v1 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The player on the ball decides to progress forward by driving at an opponent, using body feints and/or change of speed to dribble past (eliminate) them (1v1).
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Find the free player: pass 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The player on the ball scans for a teammate supporting in open space and executes an accurate pass with appropriate pace to this free player.
FINISH THE ATTACK <small>CREATE SCORING OPPORTUNITY AND SCORE</small>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Take on 1v1 to create or score 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The player on the ball in the attacking half decides to dribble past an opponent, using body feints and/or change of speed to create a goalscoring opportunity.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Finish from dribble or pass 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The player on the ball decides to shoot after a dribble when in a goalscoring position. The player in a scoring position receives the ball from a teammate and shoots on goal.



PLAYER DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK

4v4



U7 - U8

FOUNDATION PHASE I
SCANNING, RECEIVING, DRIBBLING, SHORT PASSING AND SHOOTING

PLAYER ACTIONS
A soccer skill, needed to successfully execute a team tactical main- or sub-principle requiring perception, decision-making, physical and technical execution.
ATTACKING
WITH THE BALL
Controlling
Protecting
Driving
Dribbling
Passing
Shooting
SPACIAL & POSITIONAL AWARENESS
Scanning
Supporting
Adapting body shape

U7 - U8

FOUNDATION PHASE I

SCANNING, RECEIVING, DRIBBLING, SHORT PASSING AND SHOOTING

ATTACKING

When we have the ball, we want to play forward through individual actions and short combinations, to play in the attacking half in order to create chances and score goals.

PLAYER ACTIONS

A soccer skill, needed to successfully execute a team tactical main- or sub-principle requiring perception, decision-making, physical and technical execution.

PLAYER ACTION

DEFINITION

WITH THE BALL

CONTROLLING

- Receiving and preparing the ball from short passes (distance of 5 to 10 yards)
- Control the ball in such a way that it stays as close to you as possible
- Scanning for a free teammate after performing the control (U8)

PROTECTING

- Shielding the ball by placing the majority of the body between the ball and the opponent

DRIVING

- Running with the ball, keeping the ball close to the body. The ball is pushed in front of the player staying within 3-4 steps of the player

DRIBBLING

- Taking on the opponent. Eliminating the opponent by moving the ball past the opponent

PASSING

- Playing the ball to a free teammate, into feet or space, within a distance of 5 to 10 yards

SHOOTING

- Striking the ball from short range (5-10 yards) on to goal (finishing) with the aim of scoring

SPACIAL & POSITIONAL AWARENESS

SCANNING

- Searching for the ball, the nearest teammate and the goal

SUPPORTING

- Look at the player in possession of the ball
- Finding open space for self (no opponent and no teammate)

ADAPTING BODY SHAPE

- Adjusting shoulders and hips to be 45 - 90 degrees towards the attacking goal

U7 - U8

FOUNDATION PHASE I

SCANNING, RECEIVING, DRIBBLING, SHORT PASSING AND SHOOTING

ATTACKING

When we have the ball, we want to play forward through individual actions and short combinations, to play in the attacking half in order to create chances and score goals.

FIELD	PHASE	OBJECTIVE	TEAM TACTICAL PRINCIPLES		PLAYER ACTIONS
			MAIN PRINCIPLES	SUB PRINCIPLES	WITH THE BALL
DEFENDING HALF	BUILDING UP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advance the ball • Keep the ball 	CREATE ATTACKING SHAPE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create height, width, depth 	• Controlling
					• Protecting
			PROVIDE OPTIONS TO PLAY FORWARD	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide a passing option for the player on the ball 	• Driving
					• Dribbling
ATTACKING HALF	CREATING & SCORING	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Score goal • Create chance • Advance the ball • Keep the ball 	BREAK LINES TO ADVANCE ATTACK	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engage opponent: create 1v1 • Find the free player: pass 	• Passing
					• Shooting
			FINISH THE ATTACK	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Take on 1v1 to create or score • Finish from dribble or pass 	SPACIAL & POSITIONAL AWARENESS
					• Scanning
					• Supporting
					• Adapting body shape



PLAYER DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK

4v4



U7 - U8

FOUNDATION PHASE I
SCANNING, RECEIVING, DRIBBLING, SHORT PASSING AND SHOOTING

DEFENDING	
GAME IDEA	
When we do not have the ball, we want to prevent the opponent from playing forward and regain the ball as high up the field as possible through compactness and pressing.	
TEAM TACTICAL PRINCIPLES	
MAIN PRINCIPLES	SUB PRINCIPLES
CREATE DEFENDING SHAPE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make team compact
BUILD PRESSURE ON THE BALL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Initiate pressure on the opponent with the ball
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engage to regain the ball
DENY THE FINISH	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Challenge to protect against a goal attempt

FOUNDATION PHASE I

SCANNING, RECEIVING, DRIBBLING, SHORT PASSING AND SHOOTING

DEFENDING

When we do not have the ball, we want to prevent the opponent from playing forward and regain the ball as high up the field as possible through compactness and pressing.

TEAM TACTICAL PRINCIPLES

MAIN PRINCIPLES	SUB PRINCIPLES	DEFINITION
<p>CREATE DEFENDING SHAPE POSITION TO CREATE COMPACT TEAM ORGANIZATION AND REDUCE SPACE</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make team compact 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The players move inside and close together, taking positions within a short distance from each other in an attempt to reduce space centrally. • We make it more difficult for the opponent to play forward towards the goal, create chances and score goals.
<p>BUILD PRESSURE ON THE BALL CREATE CONDITIONS TO WIN THE BALL OR TO PREVENT FORWARD PLAY</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Initiate pressure on the opponent with the ball 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The player pressures the opponent on the ball to prevent forward play. • The opponent on the ball will have less time and space to make a decision and execute the next play (force a mistake).
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engage to regain the ball 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The player attempts to win the ball back, trying not to get eliminated by dribble, touch or pass.
<p>DENY THE FINISH PREVENT OPPONENT FROM SCORING AND CREATING SCORING OPPORTUNITIES</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Challenge to protect against a goal attempt 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The player engages when opponent is in a goalscoring position and commits when that opponent has a chance of an attempt on goal: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - block the shot



PLAYER DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK

4v4



U7 - U8

FOUNDATION PHASE I
SCANNING, RECEIVING, DRIBBLING, SHORT PASSING AND SHOOTING

PLAYER ACTIONS
A soccer skill, needed to successfully execute a team tactical main- or sub-principle requiring perception, decision-making, physical and technical execution.
DEFENDING
AGAINST THE BALL
Intercepting
Pressing
Challenging
Blocking the Shot
SPACIAL & POSITIONAL AWARENESS
Scanning
Adapting body shape

U7 - U8

FOUNDATION PHASE I

SCANNING, RECEIVING, DRIBBLING, SHORT PASSING AND SHOOTING

DEFENDING

When we do not have the ball, we want to prevent the opponent from playing forward and regain the ball as high up the field as possible through compactness and pressing.

PLAYER ACTIONS

A soccer skill, needed to successfully execute a team tactical main- or sub-principle requiring perception, decision-making, physical and technical execution.

PLAYER ACTION

DEFINITION

AGAINST THE BALL

INTERCEPTING

- Deflecting an opponent's pass away from the intended target

PRESSING

- Running to the opponent with the ball to prevent them to dribble or pass forward

CHALLENGING

- Going into the opponent to win the ball back

BLOCKING THE SHOT

- Getting in between the ball and the defending goal to redirect the ball away from goal when a shot is attempted

SPACIAL & POSITIONAL AWARENESS

SCANNING

- Searching for the goal we need to protect and the ball

ADAPTING BODY SHAPE

- Adjusting shoulders and hips to be 45 - 90 degrees towards the defending goal

U7 - U8

FOUNDATION PHASE I

SCANNING, RECEIVING, DRIBBLING, SHORT PASSING AND SHOOTING

DEFENDING

When we do not have the ball, we want to prevent the opponent from playing forward and regain the ball as high up the field as possible through compactness and pressing.

FIELD	PHASE	OBJECTIVE	TEAM TACTICAL PRINCIPLES		PLAYER ACTIONS
			MAIN PRINCIPLES	SUB PRINCIPLES	AGAINST THE BALL
ATTACKING HALF	PREVENTING BUILD UP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regain the ball Prevent the opponent from playing forward Deny penetration from the dribble Reducing time and space 	CREATE DEFENDING SHAPE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Make team compact 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Intercepting
					<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pressing
					<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Challenging
					<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Blocking the shot
DEFENDING HALF	DENYING CHANCES & SCORING	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prevent goal Deny a chance Regain the ball Prevent the opponent from playing forward Deny penetration from the dribble Reducing time and space 	BUILD PRESSURE ON THE BALL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Initiate pressure on the opponent with the ball 	SPACIAL & POSITIONAL AWARENESS
				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engage to regain the ball 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Scanning
			DENY THE FINISH	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Challenge to protect against goal attempt 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adapting body shape