
U11/12 Girls

Training To Train

NOTE THAT THE TRAIN TO TRAIN STAGE OF DEVELOPMENT LASTS FROM U11 TO U14 so you have plenty of time to work on and develop these skills.

To help yourself and your players/kids, sign up for the next Learning to Train and Soccer for Life coaching courses. You'll have fun, make friends, get to know other CVUSC coaches, and gain leaps of confidence in running your own sessions!



You have a four year window to introduce and develop the skills outlined in this document, as the TRAIN TO TRAIN phase extends from U11-U15. Throughout this stage we are still focused 70% on individual skill development but you will begin developing team shape and tactics. Most importantly, you will be inspiring a love of the game through FUN with our friends and a ball.

Technical Focus for the Learning to Train Stage:

Throughout this stage, there is a continued focus on developing individual ball mastery while gradually developing combination and collective play. During this stage we spend 70% of our time on skill development. Team shape and an understanding of the smaller games (one vs one, two vs one, two vs two) within the larger games of 8v8. This being said, the fundamental games approach to developing girls soccer is through the 4v4 small sided game. Within this context we focus on developing accuracy in our combination plays (give and goes, overlaps) collective play (shape on the field) and how to create or manipulate space (movements to cover in defense or penetrate in offense). We have 4 years at this stage of development so think of it in small meaningful steps towards an intended outcome for each focus described below. Again we **divide our focus between technical and tactical development throughout this stage at a ratio of 70% technical and 30% tactics.**

The focuses throughout this stage

1. **Ball Mastery** is an essential aim at this stage just as it has been through earlier stages. We focus on developing the player's ability to control the ball through foundation dribbles, dribbling with different surfaces of the foot, changes of direction, cuts, feints, and tricks using the various control surfaces such as the foot thigh, chest and head. **Super skills**; cuts and feints such as step overs, chops, scissors, shimmies, the Matthews and the coveted Maradona are all taught under increasing levels of opposition in the 1v1 format and practiced through the small sided games through to 4v4. These super skills add a lot of fun to your practice. If you are looking for coaching support for teaching ball mastery please do not hesitate in contacting our VP of Development or VP of House to set up a Coach the Coach session. Finally, **offensive and defensive heading** is introduced and developed throughout this stage.

2. **Receiving a ball or developing a good first touch** is essential at this stage. We focus on receiving the ball or collecting the ball with a controlled touch that keeps the ball in playing distance. We are also trying to create a body shape and ball orientation that allows for a good next move, such as a pass, shot or dribble. We are looking to develop the players ability to make good decisions when they have the ball in response to where pressure is coming from, and how to maintain possession of the ball (passing back, passing wide, passing to feet, or passing into the space ahead of their team mate). Players practice receiving the ball from a variety of angles of play to reproduce the basic triangle shape in team play. We begin to introduce one touch techniques such as wall passing and volleying. Further, we begin to shorten the time between, "Control, Look, Play" through increased opposition and reducing the number of touches we allow players to make (3 touch - control, touch, pass and 2 touch - control, pass). We explicitly teach that the look leads to a decision: in order, "Do I shoot? Do I dribble? Do I pass?" **THERE IS NO PLAY CALLED KICK IT AWAY!**

3. **Second and third attacker** principles are introduced and developed through this stage: in a one vs one situation we look for a change of direction and change of pace, go straight at the defender and off balance them, head for goal. In a two vs two situation we are aiming to develop the decisions made by the supporting players to move to support the first attacker (do I draw a defender, set up for a wall pass, set up behind for a pass back, overlap, or run through for a penetrating pass). Shielding is a skill that developed throughout this stage as a natural outcome to maintaining possession of the ball as other players move in support. We continue to support and encourage the application of the Super Skills learned in Ball Mastery. Shooting technique is developed over short and longer distances (25m) and we develop the habit of reading the goalkeeper's position. Finally, we are working on refining our techniques for chipping the ball, bending the ball, and volleying the ball.

4. **Team Play and Tactics**: Throughout this stage we continue to develop the players ability to play in **combination with other players** collectively with others towards a common goal. The movement and set up of two players performing an overlap, an give and go, or other combination is practiced and refined. The technical focus in these plays is still on accurate passing, good first touch receiving, and movement off the ball.

In terms of overall tactics and team play we begin to **introduce wing play** as a means of attacking deep down to the corner and the base-line to produce a longer pass across the face of the goal for oncoming team-mates to score from. We also introduce the attacking principles of width by insisting and designating two players to play as wide wingers. In support of these wide players we introduce near and far post runs, third man runs and crossing runs (the attacking principle of mobility). It is also important as we develop wing play that we work on recover runs to get back into position as we lose possession of the ball.

By the end of this stage we will have introduced **working as a defensive unit** as we introduce the offside trap, how to play a high line of defense, and how pass back in order to switch the field. Towards this end we develop the players ability to work as second defenders, introducing angles of support and cover. Key to this role is the need for clear communications, “push them outside,” or, “Morgan has your back!” or, “just keep them there.” We develop varying levels of defensive pressure: high in the field to delay and regain possession, one to one marking in the penalty area, and how to mark on a throw in. Specifically, we introduce player to player marking for set plays, and zonal marking for basic work as a defensive unit. Finally, we refine the practice of getting compact as we lose possession in order to prevent passes deep into your own end.

Fundamental to all of this, we continue to develop the players’ ability to **read the game in terms of areas of pressure and areas of space** so that they can learn how to keep possession of the ball as a team. The ability to **read the basic phases of play** (we have the ball, they have the ball, we are getting the ball, we are losing the ball) is developed throughout this stage. Key to this whole focus is communication, “Morgan’s ball!” rather than, “Mine!”, “Help!” and, “Pass Back”

5. Specific to the **first defender**, we refine our jockeying and tackling while introducing the idea of channelling the player into support. Mostly we focus on developing players angles of approach and orientation towards the defender, positioning, and recovery runs.

6. We aim to develop the role of **Goal Keeper**. This position is rotated between a few interested players who commit to no more than 50% of their playing time to goal keeping. Keepers are introduced to the idea of becoming an integral part of the defensive unit, rather than simply being the last line of defense. Keepers develop their technical skills and decision making around catching or collapsing to collect the ball and deflecting or tackling to redirect the ball. We introduce them to near post situations and develop their place and drop kicks.

7. **Set plays** are developed with corners, throw ins, goal kicks, and free kicks. Defensively, we are develop the players’ ability to mark and cover. Offensively we are looking at how and when to move in order to maintain possession, break through the defense, and set up a finishing touch.

Game Format (games are played once per week and consist of 2 x to 30-35 minute halves with a 5 minute half time)

The first and most important principle to reinforce throughout our games is for all of us to applaud and support individual technical play and brilliance. Even at this stage we want kids to develop confidence by taking on their opponents. These players must be absolutely free from ridicule or fear from performing any technical action which doesn't go right the first time. To this end, set up lots of technical and tactical goals for the kids during their games: feints, cuts, chops, tricks and combination plays, and tactical brilliance through strong movement and wing play.

For players U11/12 level we play 8V8 including a keeper. We are emphasizing individual technical play and we are encouraging kids to dribble and handle the ball, make accurate passes, and develop confidence in the field of play. In terms of shape, we encourage the players to coordinate width, depth and balance with players high, players wide and players deep throughout their play. Regardless of what system you use to set up your team we are looking for your players to begin to read the field well enough to recognize and create space.

At U11/12, games are called by young referees. While off-sides are generally not called we discourage players from adopting a cherry-picking approach to the game. Coaches are encouraged to interact with players and come out on the field to coach as the need arises for you to appropriately encourage the movement or positioning that you are after. Again, we are looking for you to encourage good soccer when you see it from either team your matches while applauding individual efforts to dribble and take people on in 1v1 situations.

Mercy Rule:

When your team is up 3 or more goals on the other team you now have an opportunity to coach and teach something new about the game with your players. In no particular order ...

1. The team that is down might add another player, or in the 8v8 game, the winning team might pull a player: your team is learning how to play numbers down and under pressure.
2. Winning team can hold players back in their defensive third of the field and have them work in pairs to delay the opposition: your players are learning individual skills, second defender skills, and the players who are joining the play later are learning to read the field - moving in to press or close down the field.
3. Winning team can change focus to "technical or tactical goals": turns, cuts, feints, setting up a combination play, attacking deep, or intentionally setting up a certain player for a finishing play: technical and tactical goals are all about reinforcing skills and tactical habits that you have been coaching all along.
4. Winning team's stronger players must play with a certain foot, or certain part of the foot: stronger players are being challenged to develop their own skill set.

5. In the course of the game you may attach conditions to shooting such as you set up a finishing touch through a chip or crossing pass: you are now coaching a system of play that will shape their understanding for how the game can be played.
6. You may ask your forwards to pass back to an oncoming mid who takes a shot from further out in the field, or you may insist that all shots be taken outside of the box, or only from a wide angle; you are teaching kids to recognize shooting opportunities and helping them to practice longer range shooting.
7. You may teach your team to condense their defensive third and simply protect their lead: now you are playing good Italian football:)

Field Size:

For U11/12 you will have fields no bigger than 50m x 70m
and you will use the Midi 18' Goals for nets
with a size 4 ball

Again, please note that the TRAIN TO TRAIN phase is a four year stage of development that includes the U13/14 Division in our Club System. Your aim as a coach is to introduce and develop these skills knowing that you have a four year window of opportunity.

Suggested Practice Format for players in the Learning to Train Stage of Development

Session Length: 75 - 90 minutes 1/week

Start with a warm-up that gets the kids going and naturally introduces your training theme for the session. It is always a good idea to touch on what you have worked on before as you start your session.

Example: Paired tag and knee boxing followed by a dribble/movement square where you call out a specific set of cuts or feints. (5 - 10 minutes)

Work on a specific technique

Example: Set up paired cones (15m apart), two kids at each cone, each with a ball. Foundation dribble, when you call, "Go!" they perform a Matthews to the right and move around one quarter of the way around the cone. Try it to the left. After a number of touches have them face their paired cone. Start with one side having a ball. The first partner dribbles towards the paired cone while the player opposite them walks at a steady pace towards them (passive opposition) when close, the player with the ball performs the Matthews to get past their opposition and gives the ball to the next person at the opposite cone who repeats the process. To progress this to a higher level but still with limited opposition have the player without the ball pick up the pace to a run to limit time and space. (15 minutes)

Progress to practicing the technique with some opposition

Example: Repeat the drill, but have the opposition player work to defend their end. From here you might progress to short 1 v 1 battles to score in pugs set up in a 15m x 15m playing area: defender passes ball to the attacker, players battle it out to see who can score first or 60 seconds passes. Players switch sides after their battle (15 - 20 minutes)

Go into a soccer like game with targets, directions, and conditions.

Example: Extend the previous game to add two more nets so that attackers can choose one net or the other. The area should now be 20m x 20m. Play 2v2 but add a neutral player who always plays attacker. Short bouts of this game consistently changing the neutral player. Award points for goals and for players who attempt the Matthews in defeating their opponents. (15 - 20 minutes)

Play a small sided game.

Example: Play regular 4v4 in a 20m x 30m area. Outside of rewarding and encouraging great technical play you just let them play and limit your coaching. (15 - 20 minutes)

Conclude with a cool-down

Example: Easy jogging and a movement routine that transitions from whole body movements into some easy stretching. As you finish you can introduce ideas about nutrition, goal setting, hydration, or just comment on some of the great things you just say during your session. (5-10 minutes)