

PRO ACADEMY TRAINING SESSIONS

A GUIDE TO BUILDING TRAINING SESSIONS FOR ELITE PLAYERS



by JONNY CARTER



U.S. SOCCER
DEVELOPMENT
ACADEMY

Pro Academy Training Sessions

A guide to building training sessions for elite players

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Jonny Carter

Published by

WORLD CLASS COACHING

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First published September, 2017 by
WORLD CLASS COACHING 12851 Flint Street Overland Park, KS 66213 (913) 402-0030

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Chicago Fire Juniors West

Coach Education Handbook



**U.S. SOCCER
DEVELOPMENT
ACADEMY MEMBER**

When coaching, scouting, assessing or analyzing the ability of players it is worth considering the layers of training and education that has been invested to create the finished article. The ideal objective being to produce the '*complete player*'. It is often a generously used term, but on occasions there are rare players indeed who can lay genuine claim to being the '*complete player*'. The assumed definition of the '*complete player*' being the refined athlete who has a full and complete range of skills at his disposal combined with the cerebral dexterity to utilize those skills at the appropriate time.

Frequently players who do not reach the highest echelons of the '*complete player*' have gaps in their ability that can be exposed.

All too regularly, and even at the richest altitude attainable within the game, players fall short with technical deficiency or tactical misunderstanding. Premier League and MLS players are still often mitigated for their mistakes all too easily. Players unable to use their non-dominant foot have a major void in their skill set, and conversely players who are two-footed have a significant advantage. Some players lean heavily on their physical attributes of speed, strength and power, sometimes to the detriment of skill development.

When analyzing a player, from youth development through to world-class performers, it is beneficial to recognize where a player's strengths and weaknesses are most evident. From a coaching perspective the recognition of skill deficiency is a necessary trait, the coaching ability to then provide the player with those missing components is an even greater trait.

To attain the ideal objective of the '*complete player*' training is layered to ensure that the full ranges of skills are developed. The layering of the training takes on four distinct stages and this structure contributes heavily to ensuring that players receive the entire spectrum of skills required.

From a player analysis perspective and from a coaching perspective, training needs to be pitched at the appropriate level for the player's needs. At the youth development grassroots level the training focus of individual technical skills is far more necessary than team tactics. And equally at the professional end of soccer strategy is far more prevalent than repetition drills, though not exclusively.

By analyzing the ability and needs of a player or of a team the coach should be able to tailor the training to enrich the most vital requirements necessary for success.



The four distinct stages of the training focus are |

Training Focus		Description
1	Individual	<i>The pursuit and perfection of individual technical ability to manipulate the ball</i>
2	Pairs	<i>The understanding of the technical and tactical relationship between two players in response to the play</i>
3	Group	<i>The appreciation of the group, unit or department tactics in the context of the game situation</i>
4	Team	<i>The tactical agenda of the team as specified by the collective strategy</i>



The pursuit and perfection of individual technical ability to manipulate the ball

The '*Individual*' ability to manipulate the ball as desired in the context of the game is the biggest separation of players. Technical skills allow a player to have command of the ball permitting them to focus on other decision-making aspects of the game. Those players with limited technical skills will struggle to move into a decision-making phase while still being preoccupied with the ball manipulation.

Technical skills can be acquired through no other method than training, often in a *High Repetition – Low Pressure training* environment. The pursuit of technical skill is endless and can always be improved; players never reach the end of their development. Without technical skill a player is destined to forever be a burden to their team.



There is little reward for a player to have intimate knowledge of tactical team formations if they cannot control the ball to the required standard. There is little value in a coach forcing advanced strategies on a collection of players while technical skills remain underdeveloped.

And even within the '*Individual*' stage it should be considered at which point within the development curriculum a player should appropriately enter. There is little point in a player perfecting their shooting technique if they don't have the command of skill to receive the ball with an adequate first touch.

CFJ West | Fundamental Players Curriculum Overview

EF Soccer Fundamental Players Annual Program									Performance Standards
Term 1		Term 2		Term 3		Term 4			
Phase 1>	Phase 2>	Phase 3>	Phase 4>	Phase 5>	Phase 6>	Phase 7>	Phase 8>		
Non-Dominant Foot Left & Right				Creativity & Speed of Execution					
Learning Outcomes	Soccer Specific Skills Technique	First Touch Controlling Touch Dribbling Close Control Turns RWTB Ball Mastery Short Range Passing Side Foot	Long Range Passing Aerial Control Ground Control Keepie-Uppies	Ball Striking Driven Pass Elevated Pass Chip Pass Shooting & Finishing	Game Specific 1 v 1 Moves Heading Tackling Elementary Goalkeeping	1 Juggle the ball - double your age 2 Twice a week, after or before training: High-ball, CONTROL with Chest, Thigh, Foot & Head (with bounce) 3 Players should be able to do 3 fake moves in practice & the game 4 Speed of play through 1 touch pass, 2 touch pass & dribble with a 50 to 100% success rate			
	Soccer Specific Skills Tactical	1 v 1 2 v 2 3 v 3 Game Specific 1 + 1 v 1 2 + 1 v 2 3 + 1 v 3 G S Role of the 1st Attacker Role of the 1st Defender	1 v 1 2 v 2 3 v 3 Game Specific 1 + 1 v 1 2 + 1 v 2 3 + 1 v 3 G S 4 v 4 Game Specific Role of the 1st Attacker Role of the 1st Defender	4 v 4 Game Specific Role of the 1st & 2nd Attacker Role of the 1st & 2nd Defender Rules of the Game Restarts	4 v 4 Game Specific Role of the 1st & 2nd Attacker Role of the 1st & 2nd Defender Rules of the Game Restarts Role of the Goalkeeper	1 The player positions himself that he can 'help' his team-mate and that he can pressure the ball 2 The player demonstrates ability to pressure 'When to tackle / to contain' 3 >90% 1st touch away from pressure 4 Understanding off-side principles			
	Social Skills	Preparation Warm Up Respect Coach's Commands Team Tactics Talk	Celebration Courtesy Social Engagement Accountability for Errors	Communication Positive & Negative Team Agenda vs Individual	Dignity in Defeat Humility in Success Leadership Accepting Evaluation	1 Arriving at field and 'get going' 2 Inviting others into activities 3 Reflecting on receiving & giving respect 4 Helping to pick-up equipment 5 Asking for balanced feedback			
	Motor Skills Athleticism (Fitness)	Dynamic Static Stretching SA&Q Acceleration Deceleration Moving Backwards Stopping	Dynamic Static Stretching Spatial Awareness Group Behaviour Jumping Leaping Bounding Balancing Stabilising	Dynamic Static Stretching Change of Direction Walking Jogging Sprinting Body Contact Bumping & Barging Landing & Falling	Dynamic Static Stretching Throwing Catching Rebounding Depth Perception & Speed Perception Hand & Eye & Foot Coordination Head Contact	1 Stretch 3 times per week, 10 mins duration. Three breaths per exercise 2 Change between 2 simple coordination exercises at speed every 3 secs 3 Able to sprint 3 x 10yrd shuttle runs at 100% effort 10 secs rest 12 sets 4 Strong Core - able to do 3 minutes stomach muscles, back & hamstrings			
Training Focus	Individual		Individual		Individual		Individual		Individual

The understanding of the technical and tactical relationship between two players in response to the play

All over the field sets of '*pairs*' work together both in an attacking sense and when defending. '*Pairs*' of players are required no matter what formation or strategy the coach deploys. The right fullback and the right midfield, the two central defenders, the two central midfielders, the two forwards are all classic examples of '*pairs*' working within the team structure.

How any given two players respond, technically and tactically, to the play can have great benefit or detriment to the team agenda. If '*pairs*' are not in synergy with each other then attacking passages of play can be underexploited and defensive coordination can be horribly unbalanced.



CFJ West | Developmental Players Curriculum Overview

		EF Soccer Developmental Players Annual Program								Performance Standards
		Term 1		Term 2		Term 3		Term 4		
		Phase 1 >	Phase 2 >	Phase 3 >	Phase 4 >	Phase 5 >	Phase 6 >	Phase 7 >	Phase 8 >	
Learning Outcomes	Soccer Specific Skills Technique	Possession Football Composure in Possession Don't pass on a Problem		Support Play Angle Distance of Support Desire to Support Communication & Information		Combination Plays 2 v 1 Situations Overlapping Runs Give & Go		Split Pass Lead Pass Attacking Movement		1 >80% Playing the ball into team-mate away from his opponent (lead or back foot) 2 >60% Pass completion with weaker foot 3 >80% Winning personal confrontation, with pass, fake pass or fake move 4 >85% Success rate of shielding ball and getting out of pressure 5 Shooting 1 yard 20 yards 70% power
		Non-Dominant Foot Left & Right				Check Shoulders Picture of the Field				
	Soccer Specific Skills Tactical	4 v 4 Game Specific Rondo Variation in <i>Penetration</i> Role of the 1st & 2nd Atk. <i>Width</i> Role of the 1st & 2nd Def. <i>Cover</i>		4 v 4 Game Specific Rondo Possession with a Purpose Role of the 1st & 2nd Atk. <i>Depth</i> Role of the 1st & 2nd Def. <i>Contain & Delay</i>		Game Specific Role of the 1st & 2nd Atk. <i>Height</i> Role of the 1st & 2nd Def. <i>Compact</i> Rules of the Game Creative Restarts		Game Specific 5-A-Side 7-A-Side 9-A-Side Transition Counter Attack		1 Working together – defining the moment to tackle 'WIN,' to interchange position of pressure & cover, when to 'delay,' 'step' 2 >90% CLEAR & decisive communication 3 Getting in passing lane Outside players touching the line ('wider than open') 4 >90% need to be rational decision 5 >3 different runs such as wall-pass, blind run & overlap
	Social Skills	Welcome Handshakes & Hello		Organisation Punctuality		Expectations Behaviour Team Requirement vs. Individual Contribution		Responsibility for Yourself Homework & Self Training Watching TV or Live Game Play		1 >90% Demonstrate positive coping skills when facing adversity 2 Assume shared responsibility 3 Talk about 'Next time' 4 Boost the morale of your team-mates 5 Discussing pro players & Counting own juggling record
Motor Skills Athleticism (Fitness)	Dynamic Static Stretching SA&Q Running Technique		Dynamic Static Stretching Spatial Awareness Behind Group Behaviour Spacing & Distance		Dynamic Static Stretching Throwing Technique		Dynamic Static Stretching Protection Shielding Body Contact Hand & Eye & Foot Coordination Head Contact		1 Hamstring stretch at level 6 & better 2 Balance under heavy playing resistance 3 At age 16, Rest HR of > 60 4 Distance Strike Age 10 15-20 yrd Age 14 25-40 yrd Age 18 40-80 yrd 5 Unprompted, quality cool-down	
Training Focus	Pairs		Pairs		Pairs		Pairs		Pairs	

The appreciation of the group, unit or department tactics in the context of the game situation

Different departments, units or '**groups**' refer to a small collection of players within the team structure who have a common objective. These '**groups**' are found usually in six main areas.

Defenders	Left Sided Players
Midfielders	Centre or Spine
Forwards	Right Sided Players

Antonio Conte has enjoyed an illustrious playing career and is now enjoying an illustrious journey into coaching at Premier League heavyweights Chelsea FC. As the head coach at Italian giants Juventus FC Conte was very successful, winning triple back-to-back domestic league titles and a couple of other notable trophies as well. For the vast majority of his coaching time with Juventus FC and with the Italy national team Conte would play with a three man defensive '**group**'. Often more in a 3-5-2 system of play, but a three man defensive '**group**' all the same.

It was somewhat of a surprise that Conte didn't implement this strategy straight away when he took over at Chelsea FC after the Euro 2016 summer tournament. Conte's early season shift to a 3-4-3 system of play with a three man defensive group proved a turning point for Conte and his Chelsea FC team.

It's not just a case of throwing players onto the field. How a '**group**' work together within the team agenda is a vital component to success and is the reason why '**group tactics**' consumes large amount of training time at the professional levels of the game.



CFJ West | Competition Players Curriculum Overview

		EF Soccer Competition Players Annual Program								Performance Standards
		Term 1		Term 2		Term 3		Term 4		
		Phase 1 >	Phase 2 >	Phase 3 >	Phase 4 >	Phase 5 >	Phase 6 >	Phase 7 >	Phase 8 >	
Learning Outcomes	Soccer Specific Skills Technique	Third Player Movement Running In-Behind Phases of Play Speed of Play		Patterns of Play Pressing Tactics Transition Positive Positional Functions		Crossing & Finishing Transition Negative Group Tactics Box Organisation		Attacking Set Pieces Defending Set Pieces Counter Attacking Concepts Systems of Play		1 Demonstration of varying crossing styles (early, driven & bend) 2 Having the ability to receive balls when going deep, cutting behind, in- between or functioning as target 3 Third man defender's, body positioning 4 Third player instigating a situation rather reacting (informed guess by coach)
		Every Training Event Is an Opportunity to Learn Training not Playing				Win It - Keep It Keep Track of your own Success Rate				
	Soccer Specific Skills Tactical	Game Specific Role of the 1st, 2nd & 3rd Atk. <i>Width Depth Height</i>		Game Specific Role of the 1st, 2nd & 3rd Atk. <i>Mobility</i>		Game Specific Role of the 1st, 2nd & 3rd Atk. <i>Change The Point of Attack</i>		Game Specific 5 v 7 + GK 7 v 9 + GK 9 v 11 Transition Positive & Negative Scoring Goals		1 Prior to the cross, looking up as trigger for box organisation 2 Ability to scan the positioning of defenders & team-mates 3 Making 1-v-1 decisions based on the positions of 2nd and 3rd defenders 4 The role of the weak-side players to give verbal information to keep balance
		Role of the 1st, 2nd & 3rd Def. <i>Pressure Cover Contain & Delay</i>		Role of the 1st, 2nd & 3rd Def. <i>Balance Weak Side</i>		Role of the 1st, 2nd & 3rd Def. <i>Compact & Condensed</i>				
	Social Skills	<i>Accountability...</i> Of Yourself Of Team-Mates		<i>Attitude...</i> Is Reflected in your Performance		<i>Contribution...</i> Leave Everything on the Field		<i>Leadership</i> 1 Captain 11 Leaders		1 Ability to think with your team-mates 2 Recognising each others' strengths & actively organizing these strengths 3 Considering & acknowledging other view points & their value 4 Sharing relevant game information in a manner with humility & perspective
Motor Skills Athleticism (Fitness)	Speed & Quickness Fitness Testing		Endurance Core		Flexibility & Suppleness Strength & Conditioning		Nutrition & Hydration Rest & Recovery		1 Testing Arrow Head Broad Jump 5, 10, 20 & 40yrd Sprint Bleep Test 2 >90% Correct on Speed Ladder sequence 3 >80% Effective decision making in last 10mins 4 10mins 'Core' exercises each training event 5 10mins 'Strength & Conditioning' exercises each training event	
Training Focus	Group		Group		Group		Group		Group	

The tactical agenda of the team as specified by the collective strategy

The acquisition of the '*individual*' technical skill, the '*pairs*' work, the '*group*' tactics are all foundations to delivering within the context of the '*team*'. Much time is spent on many details to ensure that the '*team*' objective is clear, understood and ultimately correct.



CFJ West | **Advanced Players Curriculum Overview**

		EF Soccer Advanced Players Annual Program								Performance Standards
		Term 1		Term 2		Term 3		Term 4		
		Phase 1>	Phase 2>	Phase 3>	Phase 4>	Phase 5>	Phase 6>	Phase 7>	Phase 8>	
Learning Outcomes	Soccer Specific Skills Technique	Individual 'Function' within the team Position-Specific Training		Pairs 'Function' within the team		Group 'Function' within the team		Team Identity		1 The ability to look deep & play short 2 The ability to run, play & think 3 The ability to organise & communicate on the ball 4 Capacity & recognition on the function that's been asked by the coach, i.e. dribble to create & running to divide the defensive line
		Understand the Game Plan & Your Role within It				Positional Rotation & Player Interchange				
	Soccer Specific Skills Tactical	Game Specific Small-Sided Formations 11-A-Side Formations Counter Attacking Compact Defence Low Block		Game Specific Pressing Tactics Combating Pressing Tactics Positive Transition Negative Transition		Game Specific Strategic Patterns Attack & Defence Set Piece Appreciation Game Management		Game Specific Disorganised Strategies Attack & Defence Preparing for a Specific Opponent Scenario Training		1 Taking advantage of the rules 2 Recognise the opportunities in transition Intensify at those moments 3 Understanding of positional interchange & team balance 4 Refocusing After losing the ball 'Press' or 'drop'
	Social Skills	Personal Management Periodization & <i>Micro-Meso-Macro</i> planning		Team Management Psychology & Preparation		Game Management Evaluation & Reviewing		Life Management Career Management		1 Reading books that inspire to strengthen one's mentality 2 Seeking out mentors & be mentors 3 Valuing self-discipline 4 Setting performance standards 5 Understanding your leadership style & its effectiveness
	Motor Skills Athleticism (Fitness)	Speed & Quickness Fitness Testing		Endurance Core Power		Flexibility & Suppleness Strength & Conditioning		Nutrition & Hydration Rest & Recovery Injury Prevention		1 Intentional about hydration, balanced meals & rest 2 Ability to listen to your body. Pain is different from injury 3 Note the correlation between hydration & recovery 4 Note the correlation between physically fit & concentration
Training Focus	Team		Team		Team		Team		Team	

Season Plan | Know when and know why

Elite player/team development should be broken down into palatable segments of planning. At the highest levels at Collegiate level and professionally the *'periodization'* takes on a longer wider scope. Planning at the top level would encompass an entire year, being broken down into manageable periods based on the activity of the team through pre-season, first half season, mid-season break, second half season and off-season. The daily, weekly and monthly training intensity and loading will be planned, often on a very personal basis on the needs of the individual athlete. These small periods are often referenced as *Macrocycle, Mesocycle & Microcycle*.

Player/team development at the youth development levels can also be broken down into palatable segments, eleven weeks, with a typical player/team usually training 2-3-4 sessions per week. A **season plan** is a requirement of the fully prepared coach. Knowing where you want to be and knowing how you're going to get there is essential. Season plans are subject to change, innovation and amendment, but should also be part of correct planning.

Objectives & Learning Outcomes			Session Plan			
Social Skills	Motor-Skills	Soccer-Specific Skills	Technical	Game Related	Game Specific	Cond. Match Play
Session #1						
Respect Officials Opposition Team-Mates	SA&Q Ladder	Technical	Passing Rotation 4 Player	323 212 Passing Zone	3-v-3 4-v-4 Prisoner to Goal + GK Scorer swaps with the GK	Set-Up
		Tactical				Rules
						Off-Side Throw Ins
		Left Foot & Right Foot				Principles
						Attk Change Point of Attack Def Role of 1 st Defender Set P Short Corner

Curriculum Building & Session Planning | **Coaching Theory**

Purpose of Season Planning |

Balanced range of themes across the season | Road map of where you are going in relation to the curriculum

Technical Training |

High Repetition Low Pressure | Unopposed • Simple • Realistic • Limited Decision-Making • Developmental • Challenging • Vehicle for CP's

Game Related |

Opposed • Match-Like • Increased Decision-Making • Progressive • Stimulating • Tactical Information • Positive Reinforcement of CP's

Game Specific |

Opposing Teams • Team-Mates • Match-Like Conditions • Tactical Decision-Making • Directional Play • Territorial Invasion • Goals | Targets • Transition of Possession • Testing of the CP's

Conditioned Match Play |

Set-Up | Description of game & formation to be played

Rules | Specific game-play rules that are relevant

Principles | What '*Attacking*', '*Defensive*' & '*Set-Piece*' subjects are we going to teach

Session Plan | The essential appendage

A documented session plan should be mandatory for all professional coaches. Certainly your Director of Coaching (DOC) will expect and demand that a documented session plan be presented.

Session plans don't need to be large documents; rather bullet points and diagrams are more valuable than written text. Some wise suggestions are to plan more than you need, if something isn't working for you then move on, you can always roll over any unused activity to the next training session. Concentrate on the few key coaching points, understand what you want to achieve with the exercises that you have picked, you need to teach the players not just '*manage*' a safe activity. Try to consider where the player will go wrong, what mistakes can you predict they will make, and then when you spot the mistakes you are confident in the '*coaching moment*' to make corrections.

Make the session plan neat and legible, especially if presenting it to a DOC, have your session plan represent you as a coach. It is good to retain your session plans for your own resource and also to share with others so make the plan worth keeping and worth presenting.

Sessions should be planned to be **progressive**.

Session Plan | What does '*Progressive*' mean?

Training sessions should begin with the repetition of **technical training** in a low or no pressure environment. As the session moves on the degree of pressure the player is subjected to and the level of difficulty of the required task should increase – thus '*progressive*'.

Unopposed • Simple • Realistic • Limited Decision-Making • Developmental • Challenging • Vehicle for CP's

CP's | Coaching Points

By making the activity more difficult through the **Game Related** components players learn to develop their game play in line with their rate of success.

Session Plan | What does '*Game Related*' mean?

Game Related means that exercises/drills need to have some relevance or connection to the game of soccer. There should be a progression into '*Game Specific*' activities.

Opposed • Match-Like • Increased Decision-Making • Progressive • Stimulating • Tactical Information • Positive Reinforcement of CP's

Session Plan | What does '*Game Specific*' mean?

Game Specific means that exercises/drills have a recognizable connection to many of the rules and features of the full game. During the **Game Specific** components players have the opportunity to transfer their skills into the match environment

Opposing Teams • Team-Mates • Match-Like Conditions • Tactical Decision-Making • Directional Play • Territorial Invasion • Goals | Targets • Transition of Possession • Testing of the CP's

Session Plan | What does '*Conditioned Game*' mean?

Conditioned | '*Conditions*' can be imposed on the players or on the playing environment to encourage specific soccer behavior relevant to the session theme.

Session Plan Format | **Coaching Theory**

Session Planning

Session Plan Format | **Key Components of the 3 Stages**

Stage 1	Stage 2	Stage 3
Technical Training	Game Related	Game Specific
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unopposed • Simple • Realistic • Limited Decision-Making • Developmental • Challenging • Vehicle for CP's 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Opposed • Match-Like • Increased Decision-Making • Progressive • Stimulating • Tactical Information • Positive Reinforcement of CP's 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Opposing Teams • Teammates • Match-Like Conditions • Tactical Decision-Making • Directional Play • Territorial Invasion • Goals Targets • Transition of Possession • Testing of the CP's
Highest Levels of Coach Intervention	High Levels of Coach Intervention	Low Level of Coach Intervention

Planning the Session Plan | **Coaching Theory**

Session Planning		
Session Plan Format Planning & Organization – Working Backwards 3 1 2		
Stage 3	Stage 1	Stage 2
Game Specific	Technical Training	Game Related
Design a conditioned game that will allow the coaching session theme to be highlighted	Design an activity that will best allow the relevant techniques & skills (CP's) to be introduced	Progress the activity to introduce opposition passive opposition
List the relevant techniques & skills (CP's) that the players should be able to successfully achieve within the game	Ensure that the Key Components for the session plan format are honored	Revise progressions until players are fully active
Low Levels of Coach Intervention	Highest Levels of Coach Intervention	High Level of Coach Intervention

Some soccer coaches may use different terminology to what is written here to define the stages of their session plan. Don't get confused or obsessed with the name of the different components, yours, mine and theirs might all be different in name, but if you look at the definitions and work from those then the title becomes unimportant.

CFJ West | **Conditioned Match Play**

Session Plan Theme

Receiving Priorities & First Touch | Conditioned Match Play

Conditioned Match Play | Allow the Game to be the Teacher

Conditioned | 'Conditions' can be imposed on the players or on the playing environment to encourage specific soccer behavior relevant to the session theme

Set Up

Field Plan

6 vs. 6 + GK's | **Directional to Goal** | **Zonal Conditions**

- 44yrds wide x 50yrds long
- 2 x Wide Attacking Zones | 2 x Wide Defensive Zones
- 3 x Central Zones | Attack | Midfield | Defense
- 6 + GK vs. 6 + GK | 2-3-1 Formation
- Neutral Players play with the team in possession
- Restart each goal from own GK | Retain possession from a score
- >**Progression**
- Neutral Players opposed on 1st touch
- Off-side conditions apply

Coaching Points

Technical

- Check shoulders | Have a picture of the field
- Demand the ball | Verbal & Visual Communication
- Body Shape on reception | ½ Turn vs. Closed
- Body Shape on reception | Protect vs. Penetrate
- First Touch > Release | Prepare | Dribble | Protect

Tactical

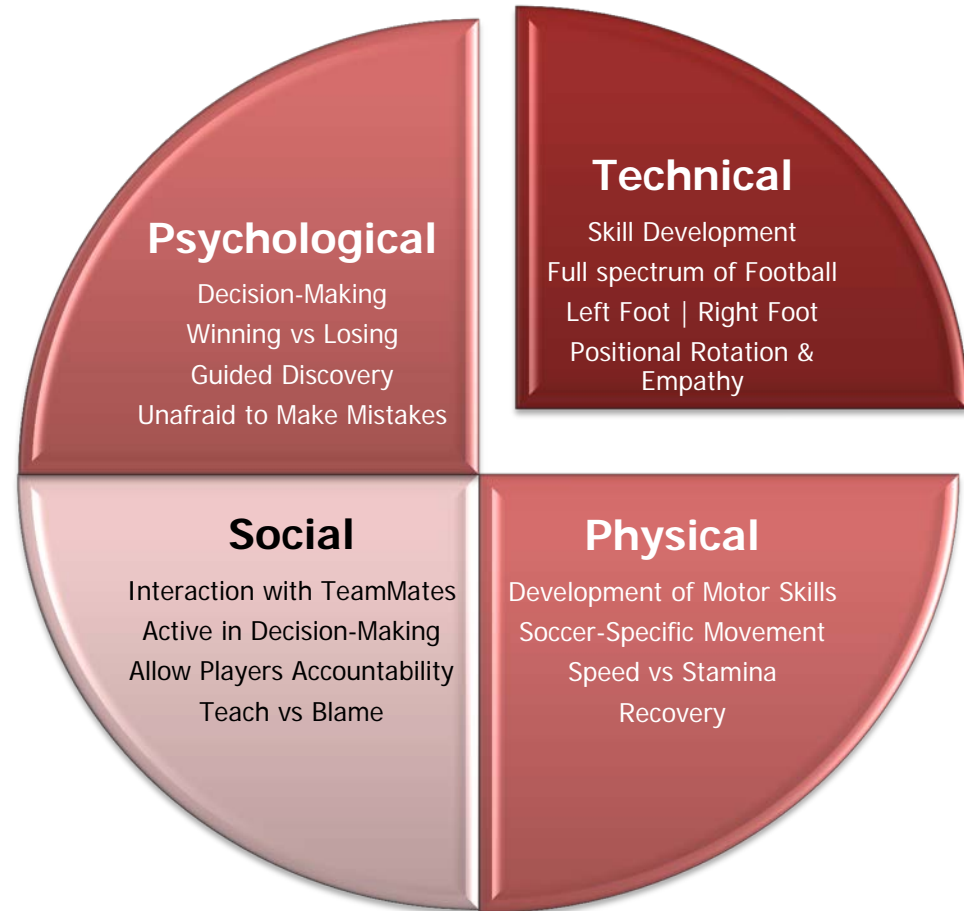
- Decision Making | Know your plan before receiving
- Disguise intentions
- Receive beyond the defender | Break lines
- Receive in front & facing defender
- Receive in front with back to defender



Four Corner Model | Coaching Theory

Pretty much all soccer organizations agree that some sort of '*Four Corner Model*' should be considered when creating a session plan and when choosing content for the activities you are going to deliver. It is suggested that each corner of the model appear in some way and in some capacity within the session plan. Some components are easy to add to your session plan content and others require a little more deliberation.

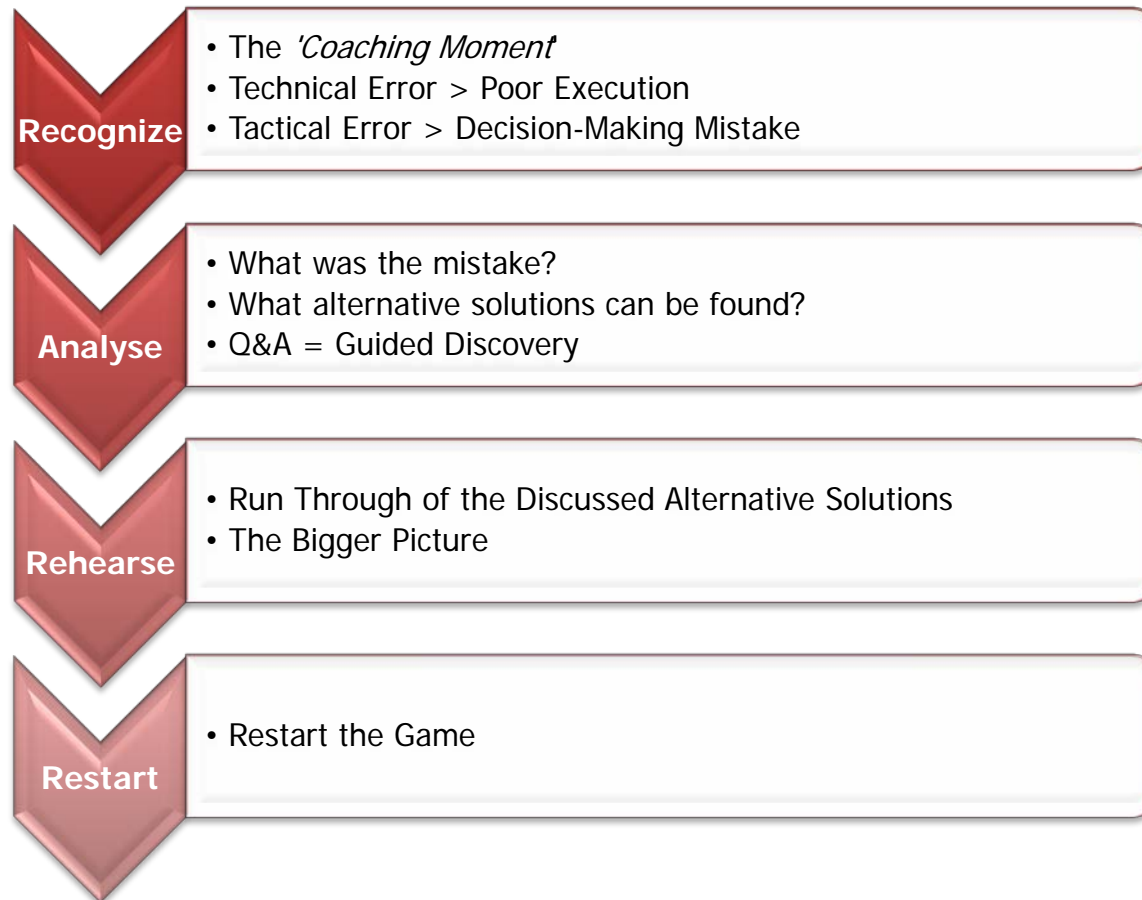
But considering how and where you can enhance the social balance of your team or of your players is a valuable addition; **Respect**, **Humility** and **Integrity** are just as valuable components of your player's profile as passing, dribbling and shooting.



Chicago Fire Juniors West Club Core Values	
Dedication	<i>Devotion and perseverance of the pursuit of excellence</i>
Respect	<i>Courtesy and admiration for teammates, game officials, opposition Respect for your own personal development</i>
Humility	<i>Display of modesty in victory and dignity in defeat</i>
Desire	<i>A passion to reach a distinction of effort</i>
Accountability	<i>Taking responsibility for your role, job or function within the group Holding others answerable for their role, job or function within the group</i>
Discipline	<i>A representation of an attitude focused on education</i>
Integrity	<i>Representing yourself, your team and your club with honesty</i>
Teamwork Teammate	

The Teaching Methodology | **Coaching Theory**

All soccer coaching organizations will have a version of a teaching methodology that they want their coaches to use when working with players and making technical and tactical corrections.



The Teaching Methodology | Coaching Theory

#1 | Recognize

Identify the mistake by the player. Was the error a '*technical*' error of poor execution or was the error a '*tactical*' error of poor decision making. It's not possible to stop and correct every single mistake, so be selective of the correct '*coaching moment*' and be sure to remain on topic, correct to the theme of your session plan.

#2 | Analyze

Find out what the mistake was. Why did the shot go over the crossbar, why was the pass misplaced, why did the 1 vs. 1 dribble fail? There is a reason, it's never bad luck, evaluate what went wrong and how to correct it. Provide alternative solutions to any given soccer-specific problem; ideally with the help and understanding of the players concerned. Ensure that the players comprehend by validating their knowledge with questions, by guiding players to create their own solutions makes for more intellectual players rather than robots who merely follow the coach's orders.

#3 | Rehearse

Provide the players concerned the opportunity to run through the discussed corrections and alternative solutions so a clear and accurate picture can be seen before returning back to the pressures of the training activity. Ensure that all players are engaged in the process. Try to coach the bigger picture and not just focus on the immediate player involved; suggest and recommend how each player connected to the play should respond to the revised passage of play.

#4 | Restart

Find a realistic method of restarting the game that recreates a similar scenario to the moment that you stopped the game. Evaluate whether the restart was successful enough to allow play to continue.

It is important to recognize that this whole process or some variation of this teaching methodology needs to be completed in a very short space of time. The players learn more through the repetition of the activity and less through verbal communication, also youth players can become disinterested by repeated or lengthy stoppages with too much talking. There is a balance between educating your players versus losing the atmosphere of your training session with boring lectures.

Top 15 Tips | **Coaching Theory**

#1 | What to Avoid

Avoid **humiliation** as a forfeit or punishment. Humiliation is not a preferred forfeit.

Avoid **exercise** as a forfeit or punishment. Running laps or doing press ups is not a preferred method of forfeit; coaches should be trying to encourage correct athletic behavior not taint it.

#2 | Coaching Position

Ensure that you can view all your players at all times. Patrol the perimeter of the playing area and enter the middle when you need to make a coaching point. Don't address a group with players behind you, have everyone in your field of vision. And have everyone attentive to your coaching.

#3 | Goalkeepers are part of Soccer **And part of training**

The goalkeeper has specific individual training requirements, but GK's should be involved in outfield training sessions as much as possible. Minor modifications can be made to plenty of training exercises to accommodate a goalkeeper, and they should be accommodated.

#4 | T on T **Time on Task**

All learners, when learning any discipline, learn by doing. If you want to learn the piano, learn Spanish or learn soccer, the very best method is to keep doing it again, and again, and again. Coach's talking time is much less valuable than a player's playing time, ensure that the contact time with players is maximized with playing and not over talking...or prolonged resting, or lengthy drinks breaks, or waiting in lines etc.

Coaching points must be concise, and consider if it is necessary to stop a full session to address individual players unless it is appropriate to do so; coach 1 to 1 or in small groups rather than halting an entire training exercise.

#5 | Elimination Games

Elimination games remove a player from participating in an activity usually because they have failed to perform that activity to the required standard. If a player is eliminated then they are robbed of the opportunity to practice and therefore get better; perhaps good enough to avoid elimination next time. Elimination has a reverse trend. Elimination from participation just accentuates the divide, so avoid elimination games at all costs.

If players do lose then allow a method of re-entry into the game that avoids humiliation or exercise as punishment e.g. five juggles and you re-cycle back in the game etc.

#6 | Positive Reinforcement

Be positive at all times and encourage good play rather than condemn poor play. Everybody responds better to support than to criticism; players are the same. If players are not performing how you want them to...then look at your session plan before you look to blame them.

#7 | Learn Players Name

This really does help with bonding between a coach and their players. Creating a strong connection and social bond within the group dynamic is important; learning names creates a more sincere environment. Take the courtesy to learn some relevant information about your players.

#8 | Consistency of Commands

It is helpful for players to have consistency of the commands and terminology used on the coaching field; this will aid with the explanation of rules and will define the coaching point with more clarity.

#9 | Be Concise with your Commands

It is valueless for the player when a coach shouts generic commands i.e., "*send it*", "*boot it*", "*make a run*", "*try and score*", "*under control*" or "*...better quality*". Provide detail and information with your commands to add validity and solutions to your coaching.

#10 | Demonstrations **Don't talk; SHOW**

Demonstrations are so much more effective than verbal explanations, where possible show what you want rather than saying what you want. Ensure that demonstrations are executed exactly how you want the players to repeat. If you cannot demonstrate yourself then assign a player who can show the element in the most correct manner.

Don't show players what not to do.

#11 | Stay on Theme

Sessions should be planned via the Season Plan to encompass the full range and spectrum of soccer to ensure a well-rounded and complete player. However, each training session should centre around one theme or topic with limited, minimal or no deviation into adjacent themes. Trying to teach every aspect of soccer too quickly is confusing and exasperating for the players; stick with one theme at a time and master components of soccer in consumable segments.

#12 | Small-Sided Games (SSG's) **Why?**

4 vs. 4 is an essential soccer environment for youth development. Small-Sided Games allow intensity, touches and maximized participation for all players involved, and for all players to be involved. Every vital component of the game is realized during small sided soccer and by limiting the number of players and by rationalizing the field conditions players receive maximum exposure to game-play understanding and genuine involvement. (3 vs. 3 is the staple of the very young players for the same reasons).

#13 | In-The-Game Coaching

While some training sessions can appear heavily technically orientated there is ample opportunity for game play understanding to be developed and those coaching moments should be maximized within the **Game Specific** and **Conditioned Match Play** environment. These components can be opportunities to introduce and reinforce more of the tactical aspects of the game.

Youth soccer players will make plenty of mistakes but it is advised to refrain from trying to shout advice to players while they are *'in the moment'*, it is better to allow the player to make a decision and then to coach the player after the moment about possible alternative decisions. There is enough pressure on players already that the youth player will not be able to hear, understand and then react to a coach's advice *'in the moment'*. The game field is not a chessboard where the coach can influence every move, allow the players to be *'guided'* to *'discover'* good decisions, not just be told the best idea through the eyes of a coach.

#14 | Coaching Points **Coaching or Managing** | **Coaching or Commentating?**

It is not enough for a coach just to arrange marker discs, hand out colors and oversee the running of a safe activity. The coach's responsibility is to teach the game and content knowledge cannot be skipped over. The knowing of coaching points separates a coach who can teach the game against a phony who just **manages** drills. Ensure that coaching points are known and referenced on the session plan to maximize the player's education.

Merely **commentating** on events as the training activity unfolds is not the same as coaching. Players require knowledgeable advice, detailed correction and to be taught how to improve; just remarking on passages of play is not the same as analyzing a player's development.

#15 | Professionalism

Being accurate and diligent with the minutiae and detail is the difference between being good enough to scrape through or truly providing a strong education for your players. Professionalism in regard to every facet of coaching is the priority concern; some examples of professional requirements are...

- *Uniform* – dress appropriately for this important environment, it does get noticed
- *Punctuality* – do not be late, this doesn't go down well with anyone concerned
- *Presentation of equipment* – set out your lines and field markings with care and attention, straight lines and same colored markers are achievable
- *Attitude* – Be confident in your abilities and bring energy to your training environment

Introducing the Principles of Soccer | **Attack & Defense**

A team's system of play or formation is just a template, a theoretical concept that provides structure to how a team will attempt to impose their '*philosophies*' or '*attitude*' on any given game. Well considered theory of a team formation will enhance the chances of a team's success but the arrival of success is dependent on the player's capacity to exercise the '*Principles of Soccer*' regardless of the team formation.

The basic primary objective of soccer is to score goals. Given the rather low scoring nature of soccer this task is harder to achieve than first might be thought. In order to score goals a team must first have to create goal scoring opportunities, while limiting the opposition attacks and protecting their own goal. There are considered defensive and attacking principles that provide tactical structure towards achieving the primary objective of scoring more goals than the opposition.

Introducing the Principles of Soccer | **Terminology**

When discussing the **Principles of Soccer** there is certain recognized terminology that allows for greater understanding and limited confusion. It is common in soccer to refer to the defensive and attacking **groups**; however, it is worth noting that when discussing the **Principles of Soccer** it is better considered to assume that all players are attackers when their team is in possession of the ball and that all players are defenders when their team is not in possession, regardless of a player's evident **individual** position or **group**.

Defining the Principles of Soccer | **Attack**

- 1. Penetration** | The first '*Attacking Principle of Soccer*' is to play the ball forward; termed '*penetration*'. The opposition goal is forward and so the ball will need to be played forward in order to score goals. **Penetration** of the opposition defense can be achieved in a number of different ways...
 - **Dribble** | the ball can be moved forward up the field very effectively on the dribble
 - **Passing** | the fundamental foundation of the game and the most effective way to penetrate
 - **Throwing** | from set-piece throw-ins and the goalkeeper
 - **Shooting** | striking the ball at goal, inclusive of heading
- 2. Support** | The arrangement of teammates and their availability to receive a pass from the player in possession; 1st attacker. Passing '*angles of support*' should be offered ahead of the ball to allow **penetration**, to the side of the ball to facilitate a change to the '*point-of-attack*', and behind the ball to provide an option to abandon, reset and re-launch an attack while retaining possession of the ball. The '*distance of support*' by the 2nd attacker/s is another vital consideration. A supporting player will require '*mobility*' in order to keep creating new **angles of support**.
- 3. Width** | By providing width to an attack an offensive team look to stretch and '*unbalance*' the opposition defensive structure and ultimately create situations through which to **penetrate**. Providing attacking width is a direct contradiction to the defensive principle of '*compactness*' and often more space, fewer defenders and less **pressure** on the ball can be found out wide. Also the delivery or crossed ball from wide areas can be particularly potent for an attacking team if executed correctly.
- 4. Depth & Height** | The arrangement of supporting players behind the ball – '*depth*'; and supporting players ahead of the ball – '*height*'. Though perhaps not immediate passing options in support of the 1st attacker the capacity to hold **depth** and **height** allows an attacking team to play expansively and is in direct contradiction to the '*Defensive Principles of Soccer*'.
- 5. Imagination** | All the structure and '*Attacking Principles*' can be overridden and negated by creativity, inspiration and imagination.

Defining the Principles of Soccer | Defense

- 1. Pressure** | The nearest defensive player to the ball, the 1st defender, must apply immediate goal-side '*pressure*' to the ball in an effort to deny the attacking **penetration** from the 1st attacker; **penetration** being the number one '*Attacking Principles of Soccer*'. The role of the 1st defender – deny the **penetration**.
- 2. Contain & Delay** | Meaning to slow down or delay the opposition attack, denying the opportunity to **penetrate** and allowing the defensive players to recover '*goal-side*', '*funnel-back*' and reorganize into correct shape. Competent defenders tend not to rush into physical confrontation rather choosing to use delaying tactics and ushering the 1st attacker to less dangerous situations on the field.
- 3. Cover** | Defensive players in defensive support of the 1st defender are referred to as the 2nd defender/s. These '*covering*' defenders are close enough to the 1st defender to assume the 1st defender responsibility should the 1st attacker be able to **penetrate** beyond the 1st defender.
- 4. Depth** | The remaining defensive players behind the ball providing 3rd defender defensive coverage '*goal-side*' of the 1st attacker. Recovery runs allow additional defenders the opportunity to work back and contribute to the defensive effort away from the immediate '*pressure*' on the ball.
- 5. Compactness & Concentration** | Refers to how '*narrow*' and how '*deep*' the team '*groups*' are across the field both laterally and vertically negating the most immediate risks. The defensive team wish to close the gaps denying space or opportunity for potential '*penetration*' against them and so they '*pinch-in*' tightly consolidating in the most dangerous area in front of their goal.
- 6. Balance** | Refers to the positioning of 3rd defenders in relation to the positioning of the attacking players. 3rd defenders need to be deployed consistently across the '*width*' and '*depth*' of the field to provide defensive coverage on the '*weak-side*' for a change to the '*point-of-attack*'.

In Possession	<i>The strategic deployment of the Attacking Principles</i>
Negative Transition	<i>The changeover of possession when you lose the ball</i>
Out of Possession	<i>The strategic deployment of the Defensive Principles</i>
Positive Transition	<i>The changeover of possession when you win the ball</i>

How an individual player, pairs, group and team behave and respond during the 4 'Key Moments' of the game will significantly influence the outcome of the game and the success of the team.



CFJ West | Traditional Numbering System of Players

The goalkeeper has always and will always be number #1.

The defensive group is organized as Right fullback #2, Left fullback #3, two central defenders #4 & #5. Occasionally you would see number #6 used instead of #5, Bobby Moore for England 1966 is a good example. The concept of a back four is a relatively new evolution in the long history of soccer strategy; the early formations were very much front-heavy with little regard for defending. The balance between defense and attack is really only noticeable during the 1950's and onwards. In English soccer a central defender is often still referenced as a *"centerhalf"* which is a legacy from the midfield player/s being pushed back into a defensive role but still carrying his midfield (half) name. The two last defenders or 'full backs' were pushed wide but too kept their name even with the addition of players to the defensive group.

The midfield four have the two central midfield players as #6 & #8; with the wide right midfield #7 and the wide left midfield #11.

The central forward is the #9 with the second striker, or playmaker, or attacking central midfielder as #10.

4-4-2 Formation	Traditional Shirt Numbers
Goalkeeper	#1
Right Fullback	#2
Left Fullback	#3
Central Defender Centerhalf	#4
Central Defender Centerhalf	#5
Central Midfield	#6
Right Midfield	#7
Central Midfield	#8
Central Forward	#9
Attacking Central Midfield 2nd Striker	#10
Left Midfield	#11

4-4-2 Formation



4-3-3 Formation



CFJ West | 4-4-2 Formation

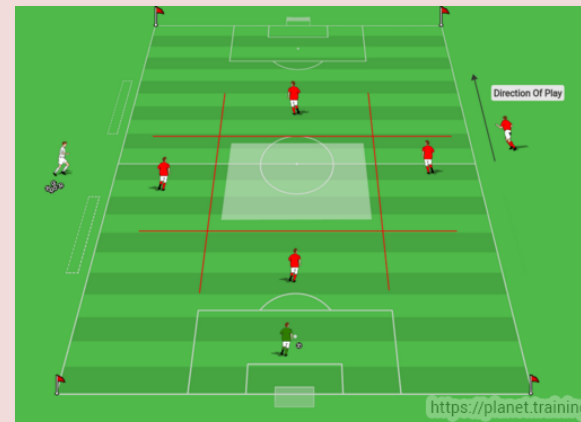


CFJ West | 4-3-3 Formation



5-v-5 Formation

1-2-1



Description

Defenders | 1 Central #4

Midfield | 1 Wide Left #11 & 1 Wide Right #7

Forward | 1 Central #9

Left | 1 Wide Left #11

Right | 1 Wide Right #7

Spine | GK, #4 & #9

Strengths

Balanced coverage in the majority of field areas | Defense, Midfield, Forward, Left, Right & Spine
Simple for players to understand their responsibilities | Specific tasks for specific positions

Weaknesses

No Central Midfielder
Lacks solidity in wide defensive areas leaving space for opposition counter attacks
Rigid structure that players don't enjoy – lacks tactical decision-making
Lacks 'Mobility'

5-v-5 Formation

2 & 2 Anywhere



Description

Defenders | 1 Central & Left #3 | 1 Central & Right #2
Midfield | 1 Central & Left #8 & | Central & Right #10
Forward | -

Left | 2 Left Side Players #3 & #8
Right | 2 Right Side Players #2 & #10
Spine | GK

Strengths

Simple for players to understand and easy to implement
Two defensive minded players ensures balanced coverage across the defensive group
Two 'free' forwards can create numbers-up situations in advanced areas
The lack of designated structure is difficult to defend against

Weaknesses

No designated *Central Midfielder*
No designated *Central Forward*
General lack of designated structure
Possibility of being out-numbered on the weak side of the field at the moment of transition

5-v-5 Formation

2-1-1 'Y' | 1-1-2



Description

Defenders | 1 Central & Left #3 | 1 Central & Right #2

Midfield | 1 Central #8

Forward | 1 Central #9

Left | 1 Left Side Player #3

Right | 1 Right Side Player #2

Spine | GK, #8 & #9

The #9 Central Forward creates the '*height*' on the ball side | The shape then inverts the 'Y' when in organized possession

Strengths

Provides '*width*' in vital areas

Retains a *Central Midfield* player at all times

Fluid formation that allows players to experience all areas of the field irrespective of assigned position

Excellent vehicle for tactical decision-making | Positional Rotation Player Interchange & Mobility

Weaknesses

Can be complicated for inexperienced players to adopt

Requires high levels of *mobility*

Requires high levels of communication

6-v-6 Formation

2-1-2



Description

Defenders | 1 Central & Left #3 | 1 Central & Right #2

Midfield | 1 Central #8

Forward | 1 Wide Left #11 & 1 Wide Right #7

Left | 2 Left Side Players #3 & #11

Right | 2 Right Side Players #2 & #7

Spine | GK & #8

Strengths

Balanced coverage in the majority of field areas | Defense, Midfield, Forward, Left, Right & Spine

Simple for players to understand their responsibilities | Specific tasks for specific positions

Retains a *Central Midfielder* at all times

Very positive attacking attitude with 2 wide forwards

Weaknesses

Lacks a *Central Forward*

Central Midfielder can become isolated and out-numbered

Less solidity in defensive areas

6-v-6 Formation

1-3-1



Description

Defenders | 1 Central #4

Midfield | 1 Wide Left #11 & 1 Central #8 & 1 Wide Right #7

Forward | 1 Central #9

Left | 1 Left Side Player #11

Right | 1 Right Side Player #7

Spine | GK, #4, #8 & #9

Strengths

Balanced coverage in the majority of field areas | Defense, Midfield, Forward, Left, Right & Spine

Simple for players to understand their responsibilities | Specific tasks for specific positions

Strong down the central spine of the team

'Width' in the Midfield of the team

Weaknesses

Lacks solidity in wide defensive areas leaving space for opposition counter attacks
Rigid structure that players don't enjoy – lacks tactical decision-making | Lacks *Mobility*
Demanding on wide players to provide width the entire length of the field

7-v-7 Formation

2-3-1



Description

Defenders | 2 Central #4 & #5

Midfield | 1 Wide Left #11 & 1 Central #8 & 1 Wide Right #7

Forward | 1 Central #9

Left | 1 Left Side Player #11

Right | 1 Right Side Player #7

Spine | GK, #4, #5, #8 & #9

Strengths

Balanced coverage in the majority of field areas | Defense, Midfield, Forward, Left, Right & Spine

Simple for players to understand their responsibilities | Specific tasks for specific positions

Strong down the central spine of the team

Two narrow defenders creates a strong defensive group

Has good transfer to 4-4-2 & 3-5-2 11-v-11 formation

Weaknesses

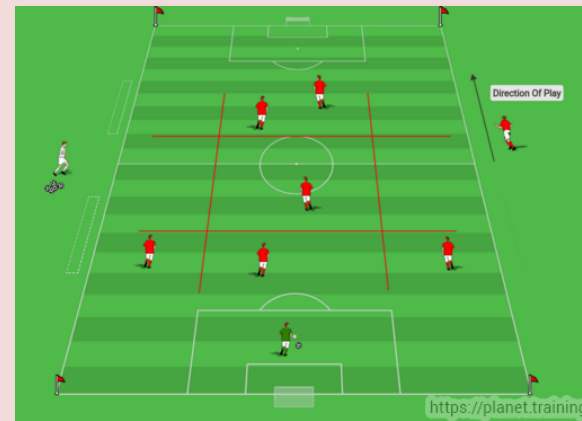
Lacks solidity in wide defensive areas leaving space for opposition counter attacks

Demanding on wide players to provide width the entire length of the field

Can isolate the one *Central Forward* and can lack width in advanced high attacking areas

7-v-7 Formation

3-1-2



Description

Defenders | 1 Left #3 & 1 Central #4 & 1 Right #2

Midfield | 1 Central #8

Forward | 1 Central Left #9 & 1 Central Right #10

Left | 1 Left Side Player #3

Right | 1 Right Side Player #2

Spine | GK, #4, #8, #9 & #10

Strengths

Balanced coverage in defensive group the width of the field

Opportunity to join defenders to the midfield and attack

Positive attacking attitude with two high forwards | With opportunity to split wide | With opportunity for #9 & #10 combination

Has good transfer to 4-3-3 11-A-Side formation

Weaknesses

Lacks natural width in high attacking areas

Central Midfielder can become isolated and out-numbered

Demanding on wide defensive players to provide width in the midfield

Potentially only one *Central Defender* playing against *Central Forward/s*

8-v-8 Formation

3-3-1



Description

Defenders | 1 Left #3 & 1 Central #4 & 1 Right #2
Midfield | 1 Wide Left #11 & 1 Central #8 & 1 Wide Right #7
Forward | 1 Central #9

Left | 2 Left Side Players #3 & #11
Right | 2 Right Side Players #2 & #7
Spine | GK, #4, #8 & #9

Strengths

Balanced coverage in the defensive group and the midfield group the width of the field
Opportunity to join defenders to the midfield and attack; particularly with combination plays
Retains a solid defensive group; retains width, retains a *Central Midfielder* and a *Central Forward*
Strong down the central spine of the team
Has good transfer to 4-4-2 11-A-Side formation

Weaknesses

Only one player designated to the attacking forward group
Rigid structure that players don't enjoy – lacks tactical decision-making
Demanding on wide midfield players to provide width in the attacking forward areas

8-v-8 Formation

2-3-2



Description

Defenders | 2 Central #4 & #5

Midfield | 1 Wide Left #11 & 1 Central #8 & 1 Wide Right #7

Forward | 2 Central #9 & #10

Left | 1 Left Side Player #11

Right | 1 Right Side Player #7

Spine | GK, #4, #5, #8, #9 & #10

Strengths

- Creates excellent angles of support across the entire field
- Allows the forward group to drop players in-between the opposition lines
- Strong down the central spine of the team
- Has good transfer to many 11-v-11 formations, including 4-2-3-1

Weaknesses

- Lacks solidity in wide defensive areas leaving space for opposition counter attacks
- Rigid structure in the defensive group that limits the opportunity for defenders to join the attack
- Demanding on wide midfield players to provide width the entire length of the field

9-v-9 Formation

3-1-3-1



Description

Defenders | 1 Left #3 & 1 Central #4 & 1 Right #2

Midfield | 1 Holding #6

Midfield | Wide Left #11 & 1 Central #8 & 1 Wide Right #7

Forward | 1 Central #9

Left | 2 Left Side Players #3 & #11

Right | 2 Right Side Players #2 & #7

Spine | GK, #4, #6, #8 & #9

Strengths

- Creates excellent angles of support across the entire field
- Good balance between Attack & Defensive priorities
- Allows the midfield group to drop players in-between the opposition lines
- Strong down the central spine of the team
- Has good transfer to many 11-v-11 formations, including 4-2-3-1
- Positive attacking formation
- Opportunity for aggressive pressing tactics high & early on the opposition build-up play

Weaknesses

No four player group across the full width of the field in any of the team lines

9-v-9 Formation

4-2-2



Description

Defenders | 1 Left #3 & 2 Central #4 & #5 1 Right #2
Midfield | 2 Central #6 & #8
Forward | 2 Central #9 & #10

Left | 1 Left Side Player #3
Right | 1 Right Side Player #2
Spine | GK, #4, #5, #6, #8, #9 & #10

Strengths

Four player defensive group covers the full width of the field
Good balance between Attack & Defensive priorities
Strong down the central spine of the team
Has good transfer to many 11-v-11 formations, including 4-2-3-1 & 3-5-2

Weaknesses

Weak in the wide midfield & wide forward areas
The only width provided by the fullbacks #2 & #3 the whole length of the field which is demanding
Opportunity for opposition to build-up play out of the back and into wide midfield areas

9-v-9 Formation

3-2-1-2



Description

Defenders | 1 Left #3 & 1 Central #4 & 1 Right #2
Midfield | 2 Central #6 & #8 & 1 Attacking Central #10
Forward | 2 Central #9 & #7

Left | 1 Left Side Player #3
Right | 1 Right Side Player #2
Spine | GK, #4, #6, #8, #10, #7 & #9

Strengths

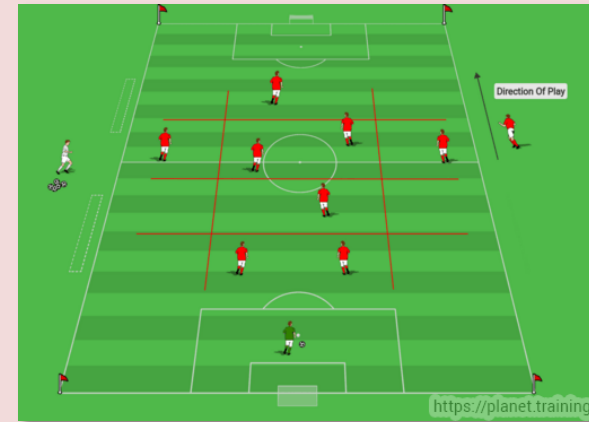
Creates excellent angles of support across the entire field
Good balance between Attack & Defensive priorities | 3 Player Δ Midfield organization
Allows the midfield group to drop player/s in-between the opposition lines
Strong down the central spine of the team
2 Central forwards

Weaknesses

Weak in the wide midfield & wide forward areas
The only width provided by the fullbacks #2 & #3 the whole length of the field which is demanding
Opportunity for opposition to build-up play out of the back and into wide midfield areas

9-v-9 Formation

2-1-4-1 | 2-2-3-1



Description

Defenders | 2 Central #4 & #5

Midfield | 1 Holding #6

Midfield | Wide Left #11 & 2 Attacking Central #8 & #10 & Wide Right #7

Forward | 1 Central #9

Left | 1 Left Side Player #11

Right | 1 Right Side Player #7

Spine | GK, #4, #5, #6, #8, #10 & #9

Strengths

Creates excellent angles of support across the entire field

Good width across the whole field in the *Attacking Midfield* line

Good balance between Attack & Defensive priorities | 3 Player Δ *Central Midfield* organization

Can easily revert to a 2-2-3-1 formation with an inverted 3 Player Δ *Central Midfield* organization

The addition of an offensive line allows the midfield group to drop player/s in-between the opposition lines

Strong down the central spine of the team

Weaknesses

Only a 2 player defensive group lacks solidity in wide defensive areas leaving space for opposition counter attacks

Very heavily orientated to the attack with 5 attackers & 3 defensive focused players

Demanding on wide midfield players to provide defensive support wide the entire length of the field

9-v-9 Formation

2-4-2



Description

Defenders | 2 Central #4 & #5

Midfield | Wide Left #11 & 2 Central #6 & #8 & Wide Right #7

Forward | 2 Central #9 & #10

Left | 1 Left Side Player #11

Right | 1 Right Side Player #7

Spine | GK, #4, #5, #6, #8, #9 & #10

Strengths

Creates excellent angles of support across the entire field
Good width across the whole field in the *Midfield* line
Good balance between Attack & Defensive priorities
Strong down the central spine of the team
2 Central Forwards

Weaknesses

Only a 2 player defensive group lacks solidity in wide defensive areas leaving space for opposition counter attacks
Demanding on wide midfield players to provide defensive support wide the entire length of the field
Demanding on wide midfield players to provide attacking width

9-v-9 Formation

3-2-3



Description

Defenders | 1 Left #3 & 1 Central #4 & 1 Right #2
Midfield | 2 Central #6 & #8
Forward | 1 Left #11 & 1 Central #9 & 1 Right #7

Left | 2 Left Side Players #3 & #11
Right | 2 Right Side Players #2 & #7
Spine | GK, #4, #6, #8 & #9

Strengths

Creates excellent angles of support across the entire field
Good balance between Attack & Defensive priorities
3 players in the *Forward Group* | Excellent coverage across the full width of the field
Positive attacking formation
Opportunity for aggressive pressing tactics high & early on the opposition build-up play

Weaknesses

Weak in the wide midfield areas
Potentially weak in central midfield versus a 3 Player Δ Central Midfield organization
Risk of over commitment to the attacking strategies

CFJ West | **Birth Year Matrix**

?-v-?	Year of Birth	Field Dimensions	Ball Size	Offside	Goal Size	Game Duration 2 x minutes	Substitutions
4-v-4	2010 Girls	30yrd x 40yrd	3	No	4ft x 6ft	4 x 10mins	Sub on Fly
5-v-5	2010 Boys White	30yrd x 40yrd	3	No	4.5ft x 9ft	2 x 25mins	Sub on Fly
7-v-7	2010 Boys PA	40yrd x 60yrd	4	Yes	6.5ft x 18ft	2 x 30mins	Sub on Fly
7-v-7	2009	40yrd x 60yrd	4	Yes	6.5ft x 18ft	2 x 30mins	Rolling
7-v-7	2008	40yrd x 60yrd	4	Yes	6.5ft x 18ft	2 x 30mins	Rolling
9-v-9	2007	47yrd x 75yrd	4	Yes	6.5ft x 18ft 7ft x 21ft	2 x 35mins	Rolling
9-v-9	2006	47yrd x 75yrd	4	Yes	6.5ft x 18ft 7ft x 21ft	2 x 35mins	Rolling
11-v-11	2005	Full Field	5	Yes	8ft x 24ft	2 x 40mins	Rolling
11-v-11	2004	Full Field	5	Yes	8ft x 24ft	2 x 40mins	Rolling
11-v-11	2003	Full Field	5	Yes	8ft x 24ft	2 x 45mins	Rolling*
11-v-11	2002	Full Field	5	Yes	8ft x 24ft	2 x 45mins	Rolling*
11-v-11	2001	Full Field	5	Yes	8ft x 24ft	2 x 45mins	Rolling*
11-v-11	2000	Full Field	5	Yes	8ft x 24ft	2 x 45mins	Rolling*
11-v-11	1999	Full Field	5	Yes	8ft x 24ft	2 x 45mins	Rolling*

**Some higher level competitions have greater regulation on substitutions*

It is always worth checking about substitution regulation with each organization, competition and game officials. Sometimes regulation is amended or alternative rules applied, be sure to check prior to the event

Jonny Carter
Chicago Fire | Emerging Talent Program



Jonny Carter | Chicago Fire Emerging Talent Program

Chicago Fire MLS Club | Toyota Park | www.Chicago-Fire.com
Emerging Talent Program | Head Coach

Phnom Penh Crown FC | Cambodia | www.PPCfc.com
Technical Coordinator u13 & u15 Academy Generations | PPCFC 1st Team

Nike Soccer Camp | Hong Kong | www.CNSportsCamps.com
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World Class Coaching Publications | www.WorldClassCoaching.com

Coaching the Principles of Soccer | Attack & Defense
Conquering Your Next Coaching Course

Coaching Possession with a Purpose | Volume I | *Coaching Possession with a Purpose | Volume II*
Tactical Soccer Coaching | Volume I & II
Chelsea FC 3-4-3 | Antonio Conte

