

Player Development Guideline

Grade 3 & 4 (U10) Boys and Girls Soccer

www.holdenyouthsoccer.org





Holden Youth Soccer

Holden Youth Soccer Mission

Our Mission is to promote the game of soccer as a means of improving the physical, psychological, and social well-being of children while allowing every player an opportunity to play at a level that considers their ability.

Our Core Values include sportsmanship, fair play, and to educate:

1. our community on the benefits of soccer,
2. coaches as the cornerstone of player development, and
3. players to develop competence in the sport of soccer.

We strive to create an environment that develops respect, promotes leadership, and instills confidence while making the game of soccer available to all who desire to participate. We aim to be progressive and innovative in program, coach, and player development

Holden Youth Soccer Goals

Our goal as a group of volunteers on the HYS board, volunteer coaches, parents of our kids, our kids, and referees is to **BRING KIDS BACK YEAR ON YEAR!** This is our measure of success. We will accomplish this with three fundamental principles of coaching!!

Maximize Enjoyment!



Providing an enjoyable experience for players is far and away our top priority, want them to come back.

Maximize Repetition!



We look to provide players with a high number of repetitions of key technical skills—particularly foot work, juggling, shooting, and passing/receiving.

Maximize Empowerment!



We look to empower players to take risks on the field, contribute thoughts and ideas, take on responsibilities, and generally have a sense of ownership.



Player Development Guideline Objective

The goal of this document is to:

- Establish clear and age-appropriate goals and objectives so our coaches, players, and parents know what we are working toward.
- Establish objectives so coaches have a common understanding of which skills players should have when they proceed to the next age group.
- Establish age-appropriate priorities and focus areas in the four elements of the game (technical, tactical, psychological, and physical).
- Ensure consistency among our programs, so we're all teaching the same way and using the same vocabulary.
- Create confident coaches that are better prepared for the season ahead.



Grade 3 & 4 (U10) Player Development Overview

The primary focus of Grade 3 & 4 soccer is to introduce a range of technical skills and for the players to have fun.

Transition Considerations

A typical Grade 3 & 4 (U10) player that starts at age 8 will play 4 seasons (2 years) of play at this level before they move up to Grade 5 & 6 (U12). They may or may not have played at the U6 or U8 levels

For most Grade 3 & 4 Players:

- Now playing on a much bigger field with larger goals
- Have been used to playing 3v3 or 4v4 games
- May be aware of positions (Wing, Center, Defender, Goalie) but still lack the discipline to play any type of formation
- Have never played goalkeeper before or using their hands in the game
- Are not used to the new rules (offside, throw-ins, corner kicks, goal-kicks or fouls)
- May be playing for Travel teams against all players of similar ability

Typical Characteristics of Grade 3 & 4 (U10) Players

1. **Can see others perspectives** – unlike in UU6 or 8 year-olds, these children enjoy playing in pairs and teams. Try to set up the pairs and team activities yourself to control the games and manage the personalities. They now have a sense of how others are feeling.
2. **Have an understanding of time and sequence** – they now understand “if I do this, then that happens”. They have an expanded attention spans and start to show the ability to sequence thought and action.
3. **Wide range of abilities and maturity levels** – there are a wide range of abilities and maturity between children at this age – children all develop at varying paces. Your challenge is to manage this range in your practice in a way that challenges each player at a level that is reasonable for that player.
4. **Demonstrate independence** – players are more inclined towards wanting to play soccer rather than being told to play at this age. Some players will demonstrate increased self-responsibility – bringing a ball, water and all gear should now be their responsibility.
5. **Organizational awareness** - Players greatly affiliate with their team or their coach—“I play for the Tigers” or “I play for coach Amy’s team”. Children at this age begin to become aware of peer pressure. Players at this age are extremely rule bound



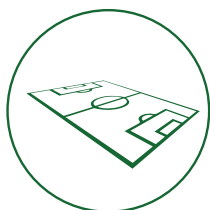
General Player Development Objectives

This document will help to identify key objectives within the four key areas of player development. The priority areas will evolve for each age group progression. The key areas of player development across all age groups and levels are:



Technical Development– These are the skills used to play the game, i.e., the “fundamentals”. This includes things like dribbling, passing, shooting, receiving, tackling, juggling, heading, etc.

Along with making sure players have fun, technical skills are probably the most important area for youth players to focus on.



Tactical Development – Tactics for youth soccer focuses largely on decision making, i.e., how players can make the correct decision given a particular situation. We should try to understand the progression of tactics and develop the players in the proper sequence, so that players are comfortable solving easier problems (1v1, 2v1) before they move on to solve more complex ones (4v4).



Psychological Development – For youth soccer, this relates to whether the player is having fun playing soccer, and other aspects such as how they deal with winning and losing, their level of motivation, and how they interact with teammates, coaches, officials, and their parents.



Physical Development – Fitness for youth soccer players can be largely achieved by just letting them play soccer, although some of the older age groups (U14 and maybe U12) may start incorporating speed and conditioning into practice games and activities.



Grade 3 & 4 (U10) Player Development Objectives

The following key training priorities are recommended by US Youth Soccer and Mass Youth Soccer for coaches of Grade 3 & 4 (U10) players. A focus on helping players develop these skills and very basic tactics is critical as it will serve as the foundation for skills and tactics that will be introduced when these players move on to the next age group.

The key focus is building off the basic technical aspects of the game, introduce intermediate technical skills, and ensure all the players are having fun.

Technical 

Tactical 

Psychological 

Physical 

Key

Low Importance





High Importance





Grade 3 & 4 (U10) Player Development Objectives



In the table below, we will go into the specific elements within each area that players will be encouraged to learn before entering the next age level.

Priority Area	Primary Focus	Secondary Focus
<p>Technical</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dribble with all sides of both feet (inside, outside, sole) • Dribble out of trouble • Dribble past someone • Changes of speed/direction and turns • Soft first touch • Receiving the ball with inside and outside of foot and chest • Shielding – Players should develop proper technique to shield the balls from opponents • Shooting with both feet (with inside of foot and laces) • Shooting for power, for accuracy and volleying • Passing with inside and outside of both feet • Basic thrown-in technique • Introduce proper defending technique • Introduce block tackles 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduce proper goalkeeping positioning (hands and body) • Goalkeeping - ball distribution (throwing, rolling, punting) • Goalkeeping basic diving from the ready position • Goalkeeping - collecting balls from the attacking player's feet
<p>Tactical</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 v 1 (attacking and defending) • 2 v 1 (attacking and defending) • 2 v 2 (attacking and defending) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wall pass (also know as give and go or 1-2) • Importance of the first touch • Immediate transition from defense to offense or vice versa • Width in the attack • Player movement on throw-ins • Goalkeeping - Calling for the ball when receiving with defending players • Goalkeeping - Communicating with the other players on the team during the game



<p>Psychological</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Keep it fun and enjoyable!!! This will help foster a desire to play (intrinsic motivation) ● Encourage imagination and creativity ● Need constant positive coaching and approval ● Foster our players to be part of a team ● Promote independent decision making ● Promote problem solving ● Encourage player to learn to deal with winning / losing ● Encourage players to watch games on TV 	
<p>Physical</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Just play soccer!!!! ● Make sure every kid has a ball as much as possible at their feet ● Introducing dynamic stretching into practices and warm-ups 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● No laps ● No lines ● No Lectures



Grade 3 & 4 (U10) Player Development Overview

As we move up the age ladder from the U8 level to the U9 & U10 level there are many differences we must attend to in order to provide an optimal experience for young players of this age. However, there are also many similarities.

Just as in parenting, it is important to be consistent in coaching and we must make sure that we follow a progressive trend of development for young players. To this end, we need to continue to focus on technique during our practices, as we did at the younger ages.

Creating environments in which players get maximum repetitions of technical skills is key. Players at this age should still work on ball mastery and demonstrate growing familiarity and be comfortable with a ball at their feet.

Player Development Web References and Resources:

- Mass Youth Soccer week by week practice plans offering proper coaching technique and example drills.

[https://www.mayouthsoccer.org/coaches/Grade 3 & 4 \(U10\)/](https://www.mayouthsoccer.org/coaches/Grade%203%20&%204%20(U10)/)

- Holden Youth Soccer has posted other coaching resources available for download at:

<http://hys-coaches-blog.blogspot.com/>

Player Development Curriculum Updates

Holden Youth Soccer wishes to thank its Board of Directors for their work in contributing to this development curriculum.

Comments and Suggestions are always appreciated

Please forward all comments pertaining to the coach's handbook or players development handbook to the Director of Development who can be located at rhall@holdenyouthsoccer.org



Coaching Notes

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