



MFC Cadets Style and Principles of Play

"Where the Trails of Passion and Purpose Meet, Begins the Path to Victory"

Style of Play: General

The following are key elements for coaches and players that define the envisioned style of play for MFC Cadets.

Match

Offensive style

All Cadet Teams will be encouraged to display an offensive style of play. This offensive style of play demonstrates:

1. Penetration oriented possession;
2. Quick movement of the ball that penetrates the opponents defense through:
 - a. Combination play
 - b. Off the ball runs ("third man running")
 - c. Advantageous 1v1 matchups
3. Shooting and finishing as end product of combination play

Quick transitions and finishing

Speed of play, effective dribbling, organized, quick movement of the ball and finishing will be encouraged in all age groups.

Position specific

Cadet teams must strive to remain organized and "in shape" when in and out of possession of the ball.

When possession of the ball is lost, Cadet Player's must learn to anticipate, react and recover to appropriate positions, locations and roles in the formation.

When in possession of the ball, particularly in the middle and attacking thirds of the field, Cadet Players must be encouraged to look for spaces and movements that directly support forward movement and penetration by moving away from their original positions.

Formation

7v7

Cadet teams play 7v7 and are strongly encouraged to use the 1-2-3-1 formation. This formation helps players express the principles of play specified and allows for preparation and better adoption to 9v9 1-3-2-3 formation, and ultimately, the 11v11 1-4-3-3 formation.

Style of Play: Specific

Most relevant points of each of the four key components of soccer: Technical, Tactical, Physical, Psychosocial.



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Technical

Ball Mastery, Control and Turning:

Cadet players will be encouraged to optimize first touch to defeat defenders, keep close control of the ball maintaining possession, and use different turning techniques to move away from the defender to effect penetration (pass or dribble) when able.

Passing & Receiving:

When passing, Cadet Players will be encouraged to:

1. Pass the ball on the ground with pace across various distances;
2. Use various surfaces of the foot to execute passes with emphasis on the inside of the foot using proper foot/ankle shape;
3. Demonstrate the ability to use proper weight and shape of the pass to effect possession and/or penetration.

When receiving, Cadet Players will be encouraged to:

1. Be mindful of how to create space from defenders with their own movements; effective and frequent use of checking to and away from the ball shall be emphasized;
2. Receive the ball with proper body shape (relative to the field, teammates etc. – “vision foot”) that allows for the ball to keep moving with pace and purpose.
3. Using various surfaces of the foot but primarily the inside with proper foot/ankle shape.

Shooting and Finishing:

Cadet players must develop the ability to shoot on goal from various angles and distances. All Cadet Player's must be encouraged to take chances and shoot to finish during the run of play.

All cadet players must develop the ability to finish from services delivered from various angles, and distances; on the ground and flighted. Particular emphasis on using the inside of the foot to finish with accurate, driven finishes.

Tactical

Playing Out From The Back:

All Cadet Teams must become comfortable and confident playing the ball from the back through the midfield, to the final third of the field.

Possession:

All Cadet Teams must strive to keep possession of the ball, assessing risk-reward decisions based on various factors, learning to play in the direction the player is facing (minimize risk due to turning) and utilizing a "minimum" touch approach to increase speed of play. Players will be encouraged to support possession through effective movement of runs off the ball (creating passing options or otherwise creating space).



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Changing the Point of Attack:

Once the possession of the ball is consolidated all Cadet Teams must learn how to recognize the need to change the point of attack, then how to transfer the ball (change the point of attack) in the most efficient way from one area of the field to another to maintain possession and effect attack oriented/combo play going forward.

Attack Oriented/Combination Play

When in the middle and attacking thirds of the field, Cadet players must be creative, intelligent and confident to make risk-reward decisions, recognize and take advantage of 1v1 matchups and utilize combination play (overlaps, takeovers, wall pass, 1-2, etc.), coupled with off-the-ball runs ("third man running") to unbalance the defense and penetrate effectively with pace. Particular emphasis must be placed upon encouraging Cadet Players recognize how, when and where, to make inside-out/outside-in runs; trying to effect Angled Pass/Straight Run, Angled Run/Straight Pass combinations.

Quick Transition: Offense-Defense-Offense:

When possession is lost, Cadet Players must react quickly and decide to:

1. Apply coordinated team-oriented pressure to regain the ball, or;
2. Recover with properly angled runs to "get behind" the ball coupled with proactive weak-side recovery runs to provide "balance" to the first and second defender.

As a result of maintaining proper defense shape, the transition to effective possession is increased when the ball is won because players are positioned for the immediate counter-attack.

Defense:

All Cadet Teams will use ball oriented defense. Particular emphasis will be placed on Cadet Players learning the roles of the first and second defender (pressure and cover).

Cadet Teams should be introduced to the following defending tactics:

1. High pressure in the attacking third of the field
2. Low pressure/patient defending techniques and tactics in the middle and defending thirds of the field where proactive weak-side recovery runs provide balance to the first and second defenders.

Physical

Speed & agility

Cadet Player speed and agility abilities will be across a wide spectrum. As coaches we should be mindful of ways to help players improve their speed and agility within the training sessions without dedicating time specifically to S&A development.

Endurance

Individual players and teams will train to be resilient to high-intensity action. Training sessions should be intense and high-paced, being mindful of economic training without dedicating time specifically to endurance development.



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Strength & Power

Strong players develop their speed more quickly, prevent injuries and are more competitive in games. Training sessions should be intense and high-paced, being mindful of economic training without dedicating time specifically to strength and power development.

Psychosocial

Respect & discipline

Cadet players should be encouraged to adapt to various roles on the team. They must be consistently encouraged to respect parents, teammates, coaches, referees and opponents. As coaches, we must communicate expectation of behavior and be consistent in the application of those expectations across all individuals' teams and the entire program.

Cooperation

Cadet players should grow in their understanding of their part of a unit, and learn to cooperate with teammates to achieve the objectives for a given task, session or game, as well as for the entire season.

Competitiveness

Cadet players should grow as competitors. Competitiveness can be infused in players through consistent and well communicated coaching expectations; organized, competitive and intense training sessions; and through improved player confidence via skill development. Competitive players will be rewarded for their effort and focus.

Principles of Play: Coaches

1. **Training sessions:**
 - a. Individual player skills: every Cadet training session must devote time to individual skill development; specifically ball mastery centered on dribbling. And ball control primarily with the feet but also other surfaces (thigh, chest).
 - b. Activities and possession games are a means to improve both the technique and tactical understanding of the players. Activities should encourage competitiveness, speed of play, and be realistic to the game.
 - c. The objective of possession games **MUST** ultimately be to result in penetration towards the opponent's goal. Therefore possession games should progress and be conditioned with direction.
2. **Drills and Activities:** Use of drills should be used for technical development and their duration minimized. Drills should progress to activities conditioned with opposition to increase the competitiveness of the players.
3. **Economy of training:** Activities and games should be high paced and infused with intensity emphasizing speed and agility. Training sessions should contain numerous, short but intense working-periods, maximizing economy of training.

Principles of Play: Players

1. **1v1 situations:** In possession - encourage determination to recognize and take on defenders in advantageous 1v1 situations. Lost possession - encourage determination to regain control of the ball through effective defending techniques.
2. **First touch:** Make a clean, controlled first touch without stopping the ball. Take the touch away from pressure and into free space looking to defeat the defender and penetrate with minimal touches when possible.
3. **Keep the ball on the ground:** A ball on the ground is easier to control and moved more efficiently by the team.
4. **Accuracy, weight, shape and quality of the pass:** Passing must be firm and accurate, with the proper weight, targeting the front foot of the target player as much as possible.
5. **Perception and awareness:** All players with or without the ball should constantly scan the field and constantly work on their situational awareness.
6. **Individual transition:** Players must react quickly when possession change from in-possession to lost possession and vice-versa.
7. **Keep the game simple:** Do not force situations. Learn to play in the direction your facing. Do not over-dribble or be careless with the ball.
8. **Minimizing touches:** Minimizing the number of touches improves the speed of play.
9. **Shooting:** All players are encouraged to shoot.
10. **Manage and Take Risks:** Soccer is an error prone sport and mistakes are part of the game and learning process. You are encouraged to take risks in training sessions and in games to increase the speed of play.

Rush Core Values

Accountability: Be accountable for your actions and hold others accountable for their actions. Who am I ultimately accountable to, and who judges my work?

Advice: Seek out advice and aspire to be the best. In order to learn, we must be open to learning and consider the advice of others. Are you coach-able?

Empathy: Empathy is at the core of solid relationships.

Enjoyment: Enjoy your work, this is a gift. The desires of diligent workers are satisfied.

Humility: Apologize when you make a mistake. Forgive others and do not look back.

Leadership: Leaders strive to be trustworthy, honest and sincere. They possess traits such as integrity and honor. They are willing to serve others and sacrifice their own interests. Leaders are constructive and hardworking.

Passion: Passion always trusts, always hopes and always perseveres. Passion never fails.

Respect: Respect everyone. Respect the opponent, the rules, your colleagues, your superiors and subordinates. Be thoughtful and considerate.

Safety: Our environment is safe. That includes the office, our travels, the fields and our bodies. Safety is not only physical safety from harm, but safety from ridicule and attack. We are comforted and encouraged in the club. We portray self-control and kindness to our staff, colleagues and players.

Tenacity: To be successful, persevere.... persevere but do not be anxious. Fear no one. Be strong and courageous. Work when no one else is looking, even when the circumstances are not right and everyone else quits. Diligence never loses because it never quits. Outwork your opponent, and most importantly, work smart. Don't wait for external inspiration. The people who go far do so because they motivate themselves and give their best, regardless of how they feel.

Unity: Together all things are possible. When your teammates are down, bear each other's burdens; conversely, celebrate your teammate's successes.



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Principles of Play: Team

1. **Defend and Attack as a unit:** All players attack and all players defend: All players must be involved in the game as a unit and the team maintains good shape in support of the ball.
2. **Numerical advantage:** Soccer is a game of numbers where we try to create a numerical advantage in attack and avoid being in a numerical disadvantage in defense.
3. **Flow of the ball:** The ball should flow from inside (of the space) to outside and outside to inside. Balls out wide are more secure and the ball in the middle increases the options of play.
4. **Offensive Shape (Left, Right, Split):** The player in possession of the ball must receive constant support and have at least three passing options as much as possible.
5. **Speed of play:** Quick movement of the ball creates overload situations and 2v1 opportunities.
6. **Movement off the ball:** Find the best available space to create passing options for the player in possession of the ball.
7. **Pressure as a unit:** Organized pressure forces the opponents to commit errors.
8. **Transition:** Improve transition by reducing the number of passes needed to arrive at the target area or the opponent's goal.
9. **Take initiative during the game:** Team breakdowns will occur. The team must be capable of adapting to new situations and imposing its own style of play during the game.