

# **Virginia Legacy Soccer Club**

Williamsburg, Va – Newport News, Va



## **Age Group Characteristics and Training Priorities**

### Club Mission and Philosophy

The mission of the Virginia Legacy Soccer Club is to provide fun, dynamic, and inspiring soccer experiences for youth players of all ages and ability levels from diverse backgrounds and regardless of financial means. By providing the highest quality recreational, developmental, and competitive soccer programs that promote players’ physical, social, and emotional growth, the Virginia Legacy Soccer Club aims to continuously:

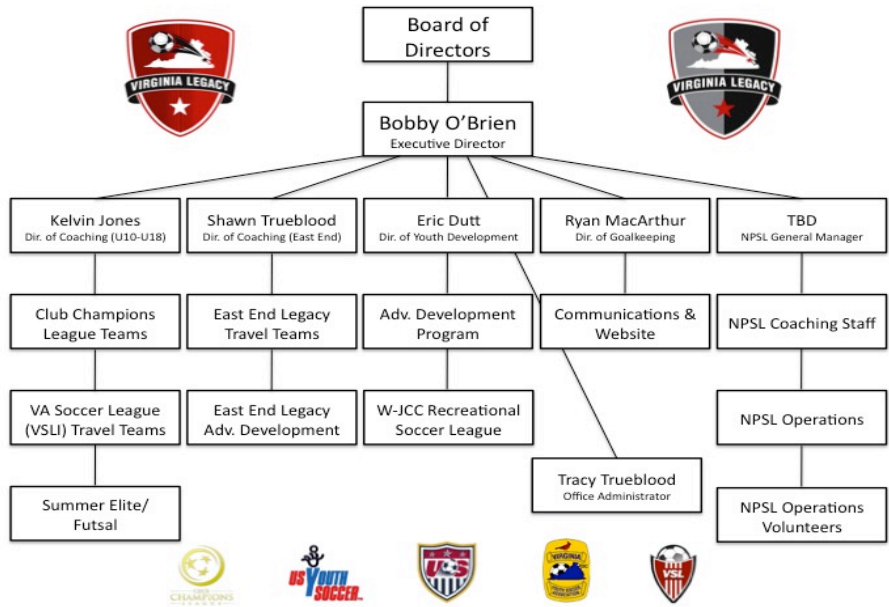
- Advance a reputation of excellence
- Engender the character values of teamwork, sportsmanship, and commitment among all players and families
- Foster a genuine love of the sport and an affinity for the club among all players and families
- Ensure the opportunity for each player to reach his or her greatest potential within the sport
- Contribute proactively to the betterment of our community through partnership with schools, universities, and surrounding city and county governments.

### Code of Conduct

As a member of the Virginia Legacy Soccer Club we demand the highest of expectations from our players as well as their families. We remind you that you are representing the VLSC at all times and to conduct yourself in a respectable manner. We pride ourselves on having the highest quality members associated with the Club. At all times we expect players to respect all the relative participants in and around our soccer community including but not limited to coaches, officials, referees, players and parents whether they are other VLSC members or from opposing clubs. Any violation of this code will be handled in a case-by-case basis.

### VLSC Technical Staff

Technical Director – Bobby O’Brien  
 Director of Coaching (U10-U18) – Kelvin Jones  
 Director of Coaching (East End) – Shawn Trueblood  
 Director of Youth Development – Eric Dutt  
 Director of Goalkeeping – Ryan MacArthur



**U10**

**Continued development of Individual  
creativity and the introduction of small  
group tactics**



**U10**                    **Continued development of Individual creativity and the introduction of small group tactics**

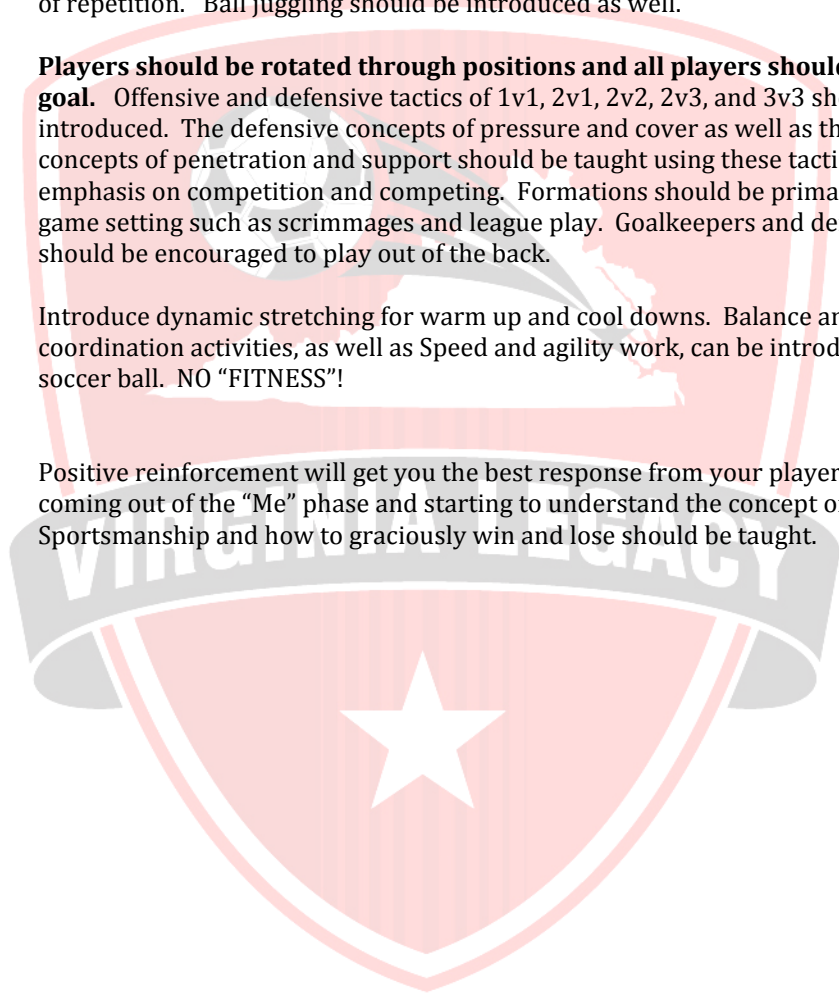
**Coach:**                Must be passionate about the game and enthusiastic when working with younger kids. Must be a good teacher. A high priority on creating an environment in which the players continue to have fun is key. Emphasis on the process of player development and not the results must be expressed to both players and families. Encourage the players to make mistakes and take risk. Ask a lot of questions instead of giving them the answers. "I don't know" is not an acceptable response.

**Technique:**        Individual development is placed above that of the team. Put emphasis on ball striking and receiving, as well as individual ball mastery through activities with lots of repetition. Ball juggling should be introduced as well.

**Tactics:**            **Players should be rotated through positions and all players should play in the goal.** Offensive and defensive tactics of 1v1, 2v1, 2v2, 2v3, and 3v3 should be introduced. The defensive concepts of pressure and cover as well as the attacking concepts of penetration and support should be taught using these tactics. Put an emphasis on competition and competing. Formations should be primarily taught on game setting such as scrimmages and league play. Goalkeepers and defenders should be encouraged to play out of the back.

**Physical:**           Introduce dynamic stretching for warm up and cool downs. Balance and coordination activities, as well as Speed and agility work, can be introduced with the soccer ball. NO "FITNESS"!

**Mental/  
Social:**            Positive reinforcement will get you the best response from your players. They are coming out of the "Me" phase and starting to understand the concept of "team". Sportsmanship and how to graciously win and lose should be taught.



**Training  
Priorities:**

60% of training should be technical training

- Ball manipulation and control
  - Running with the ball
  - Individual moves (Scissors, Cruyff, Matthews, Maradona, feints etc...)
  - Turning with the ball
- Ball striking
  - Technique of passing with both feet
    - i. Stationary and on the move
  - Technique of shooting with both feet
    - ii. Stationary and on the move
  - More advanced players should be encourage to strike the ball with various surfaces of their feet
    - iii. Inside
    - iv. Laces
    - v. Outside
  - 1<sup>st</sup> touch control
    - vi. Preparation touch
    - vii. 1<sup>st</sup> touch out of pressure
    - viii. On the move
    - ix. Receiving bouncing balls

15% of training should focus on the understanding of the basic Attacking and Defending principles of play through competition in numbers up and numbers down activities (without direction).

- 3v1, 3v2, 4v1, 4v2, 5v2, 5v3
  - Create situations where the players can have success.
  - Role of 1<sup>st</sup> defender (pressure)
  - Role of 2<sup>nd</sup> defender (cover)
  - 1<sup>st</sup> principle of attack (penetration)
  - 2<sup>nd</sup> principle of attack (support)
  - Continue to focus on technical ability during the run of play. (1<sup>st</sup> touch out of pressure, running with the ball, firm passes)

15% of training should consist of competitive small-sided games

- No larger than 5v5
  - Emphasis on Winning and Losing
  - At all times players should know the score
  - Games should have no restrictions and should simulate an actual game.
  - Encourage players to experiment and take risk.
  - Attacking shape (diamond)
    - i. Provides width, height, and depth
    - ii. Penetration and Support
  - Emphasis on playing in a “diamond” formation

10% of train should focus on the physical component of development

- There should be ample time for a warm up and cool down
  - Introduce dynamic stretching vs. static stretching
  - Speed and agility work can be done both with and without the ball.
  - **NO “FITNESS”**

**U12**

**Continued development of individual  
creativity, skill, and group tactics**



## **U12 Continued development of individual creativity, skill, and group tactics**

**Coach:** Must be enthusiastic about teaching and working with kids! “Practice what you preach” coach must possess the ability to demonstrate. “Paint the picture”. Continued positive reinforcement to players is important, but be honest. If players are to get better they must understand what they did wrong.

**Technique:** Increase the technical speed of the players under pressure. Continued focus on individual technical ability is a priority. The technique of ball striking and receiving should continue to be taught through repetition. Activities should promote players movement off the ball before and after striking.

### **Areas of focus:**

- 1<sup>st</sup> Touch
- Receiving balls out of the air
- Preparation touch
- Striking with all surfaces of the foot
- Receiving with all surfaces of the body

**Tactics:** Players should be rotating positions. Offensive and Defensive principles of play can be elaborated through 1v1, 2v1, up to 6v6. Continue building on attacking principles by incorporating combination play (see training priorities). Goalkeepers and defenders are still encouraged to play out of the back. They should understand that the attack starts from the keeper. The concept of defensive balance should be taught in conjunction with immediate pressure, and cover, on the ball (Small Group Defending).

**Physical:** This is the age where many players’ bodies start to physically change. Players that were previously very agile and coordinated may go through periods of awkwardness. Continued focus on SAQ training should be incorporated during warm up and cool down periods in training.

**Mental/  
Social:** Coaches should be honest with players in their development. Coaches should help players set personal goals and help them understand the process of achieving such goals. Players’ ability to stay focused greatly increases from younger ages. Positive reinforcement is still very important as players are starting to go through the early stages of puberty and confidence in their abilities may start to be questioned.

**Training  
Priorities:**

50% of training should consist of technical training. This can also be taught through activities, with or without direction, that incorporate these topics.

- Continued emphasis on ball manipulation
  - Players should be increasingly comfortable on the ball with 1v1 moves
    - (Scissors, Cruyff, Matthews, Maradona, feints etc...)
  - Increase knowledge of when and how to attack a defender
  - Running with the ball at speed
  - Turning with the ball
    - Out of pressure
    - Changing the point of attack
- Players should be encouraged to pass...think...move.
  - How quickly can they play the ball and then receive it again?
- Continued emphasis on ball striking and receiving
  - Technique of striking the ball with both their dominant and non-dominant foot.
  - Technique of striking the ball with all surfaces of the foot (inside, outside, laces, heel).
    - Teach deception
      - Add a feint to your pass
      - No look
  - Striking balls over distance
    - Driven balls on the ground
    - Driving balls in the air
    - Chipped balls
  - Receiving the ball with all surfaces of the body. Balls should be played from different angles (out of the air, on the ground, bouncing, driven, lofted, etc...)
    - Feet
      - Inside, outside, sole
    - Thighs
      - 1<sup>st</sup> touch down to feet not up in air
    - Chest
      - 1<sup>st</sup> touch down to feet not up in air

20% of training should expand the attacking and defensive principles of play through possession activities with direction (to goals or targets). **Winners must be determined.**

- **Players should be taught and encouraged to play out of the back**
- Attacking principles
  - (Penetration)
    - Continued emphasis on combination play
      - Give and Go's
      - 3<sup>rd</sup> man runs
      - Overlap's
  - (Support)
    - Formation of Triangles around the ball
    - Formation of a Diamond as attacking shape
  - (Width/Depth)
    - Introduction of spacing on the field
      - Forwards - provide **height** ahead of the ball
      - Defenders - provide **depth** behind the ball



- Flank players – provide **width** on the sides of the ball
- Defensive Principles
  - (Pressure)
    - 1<sup>st</sup> defender puts immediate pressure is applied to the ball
      - Back pass
      - Poor touch
      - Turnover of possession
  - (Cover)
    - 2<sup>nd</sup> defender is in a position to cover the 1<sup>st</sup> defender in case they are beat
      - Body shape in a position where they cannot be split with a penetrating pass or dribble.
  - (Balance)
    - Player on the “offside” of the ball stays compact to minimize playing space.
    - They are in a position to become the 2<sup>nd</sup> defender of the 1<sup>st</sup> defender is beaten.

20% of training should consist of Competitive Small Sided Games, which address the principles of play above.

- **Players should be taught and encouraged to play out of the back!!**
- WINNERS MUST BE DETERMINED
  - Players should know the score at all times
- GAMES MUST HAVE DIRECTION
  - To goals
  - Include Goalkeepers
- No larger than 8v8
- Coaching should be done through the flow of the game
  - The games should only be stopped through the normal flow of the game.
- Coaching should deal with the attacking principles of play above.

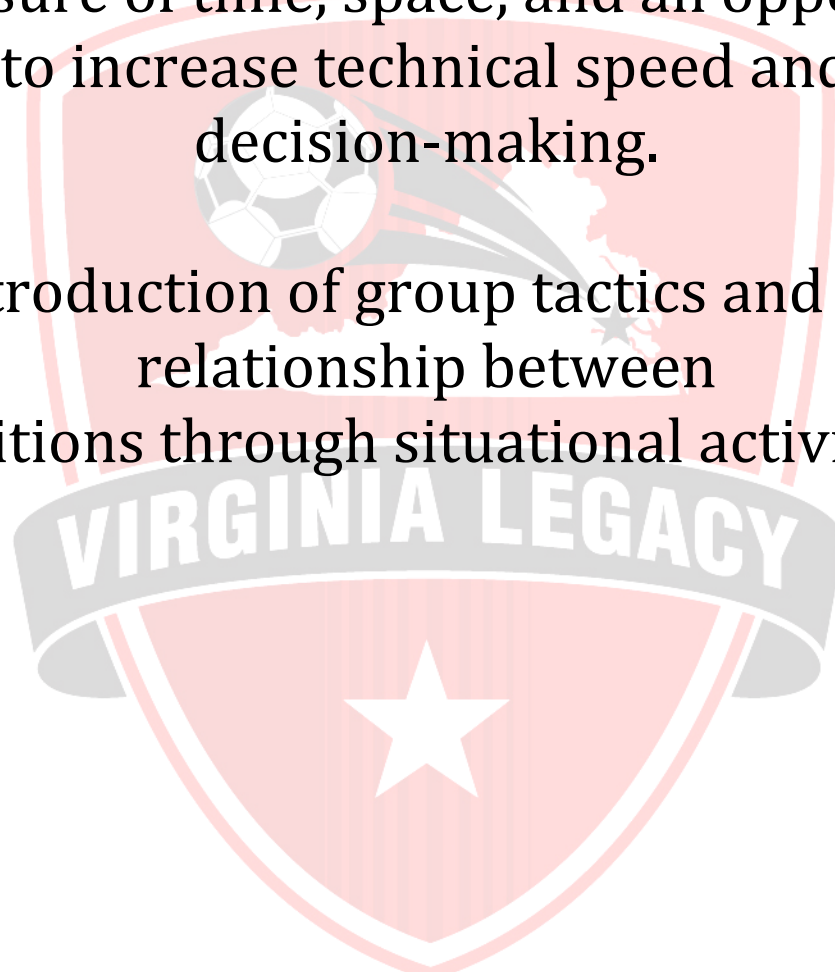
10% of training should consist focus on the physical component of training.

- There should be ample time for both a warm up and cool down
  - Your warm up can be included in your technical portion of training.
- Continued focus on dynamic stretching over static stretching.
- “Fitness” should be done with the ball
  - ex. 1000 touches on the ball
- There should be a higher priority placed on speed and agility work for our players at this age.
  - Ladders can be introduced
    - Should not be used for every session

## U14

Development of individual skills under pressure of time, space, and an opponent to increase technical speed and decision-making.

Introduction of group tactics and the relationship between positions through situational activities.



**U14** Development of individual skills under pressure of time, space, and an opponent to increase technical speed and decision-making. Introduction of group tactics and the relationship between positions through situation activities.

**Coach:** Must understand the concepts taught at the 8v8 level and how they relate to the 11v11 game. Coaches should be demanding of players and have a good grasp of player development. Coaches should have the ability to understand each players' abilities as well as how to increase those abilities individually. Coaches should possess a strong personality and be willing to hold players accountable and teach them consequences for actions.

**Technique:** Continue to increase individual technical speed under pressure of time, space, and an opponent by increasing individual technical skill. This will help speed up decision-making. The more comfortable a player becomes on the ball the quicker and easier it becomes to build new skills and understanding of tactical concepts.

**Areas of Focus (under increased pressure)**

- Dribbling
- Ball striking (**while in motion**)
  - Passing
  - Shooting
- Receiving
- Tackling
- Heading

**Tactics:** Practices should be competitive with an emphasis on winning and losing. Players should be encouraged to take risk but also understand that correct time to take risk. Players should also start to recognize when and how to get the ball out of pressure as well as when and how to win the ball back under the Attacking and Defending principles of play (principles of play for age group outlined below). Goalkeepers and Defenders should understand the correct situations of when and how to play out of the back vs. going long. The concept of team and individual possession, as well as team compactness, should be taught.

**Physical:** Anaerobic exercise should be introduced at this age as players bodies are now that the stage of development they we can start seeing a measureable difference. "Fitness" should be taught as a **consequence** for an action not as a **punishment** (See mental/social qualities below). Power and acceleration should be taught not only in start lines but in lateral movements as well. This will help increase technical speed and technical ability. There needs to be an increase focused on proper stretching techniques. This is the age where injuries start to occur through poor stretching and over use.

**Mental/  
Social:** At this age players' ability to process information, to think, and to problem solve greatly increase! Many players will continue to go through puberty and may become uncomfortable and less confident within them self. Positive reinforcement is still very important but be honest and fair in your explanation. The development of "mental toughness" and how to get through difficult activities is key. Players should be encouraged to watch professional games and develop a "favorite player". Players should be held accountable for their actions and own "their games" and your role as a coach to help continue to develop them individually. If they are to improve we must be truthful with what they need to improve on. Players should be taught consequences over punishment. For example as a consequence for not wearing your shin guards they will have to sit out of practice, because in a game they cannot play without them.

## Training Priorities:

40% of training must consist of technical training. This can be done through activities with and without direction.

- Continued emphasis on ball manipulation centered on individual possession.
  - Players should understand the relationship between risk and reward and whether to attack and keep possession.
  - Dribbling
    - Ball shielding.
    - Spin turns (out of pressure )
    - Continued mastery of feints and moves.
  - Ball striking
    - Ball striking should be centered on the player moving prior to and after the strike and then getting into position to receive the ball as quickly as possible.
    - Passing **(on the move)**
      - Driven balls over distance
      - Bent balls over distance
        - Inside/outside of foot
        - Crossing
      - Chipped balls over distance
    - Finishing
      - On the run
      - On the turn
      - From all angles
      - Volleys/half volleys
      - From crosses
    - Receiving **(on the move)**
      - Emphasis on a quality first touch out of pressure
        - Balls out of the air
        - Balls on the ground
        - Balls driven and chipped from distance
  - Tackling
    - Proper technique
      - Sliding
  - Heading
    - To clear a ball
    - As a pass
    - To finish

20% of training should contain activities that focus on the Attacking and Defending Principles of play for the age group (with or without direction). Activities should be coached to increase tactical speed. **Winners and Losers must be determined.**

- 4v4 up to 8v8
  - Adding neutrals to create numbers up and numbers down situations are encouraged.
- **Attacking Principles**
  - **Players are encouraged to play out of the back but must learn to read the cues of when to play short and when to go long.**
  - (Penetration)
    - Players should be encouraged to take players on 1v1 when appropriate
      - Isolation
      - To get a shot off
      - To retain possession

- Give and Go's (recognition of creating numbers up and numbers down situations)
    - Overlaps (recognition of creating numbers up and numbers down situations)
  - Driven/chipped balls into forwards feet
  - Driven/chipped balls into space
- (Support)
  - How quickly can we create numbers around the ball?
  - Recognition of creating numbers up and numbers down situations
    - Do we attack vs. do we possess?
  - Creating triangles around the ball
  - Attacking in a diamond
- (Width/Depth)
  - All players should know the responsibilities at each position
    - Forwards - provide **length** ahead of the ball
    - Defenders - provide **depth** behind the ball
    - Flank players - provide **width** on the sides of the ball
- (Mobility)
  - Promote the interchanging of positions!
  - Players off the ball need to unbalance the defense
    - Running into positions to create scoring opportunities
      - On and off the ball
    - Creating numbers up situations in support of the ball.
- (Improvisation)
  - Introduction and encouragement of players using their individual skills to create opportunities.
- **Defensive Principles**
  - **Players should start to recognize when to high and low press and the cues that dictate each.**
  - **Introduction of Zonal Marking**
    - **Relationship between positions with the same line**
      - **MF - MF**
      - **D - D**
      - **S - S**
- (Pressure)
  - Understanding when to press and when to drop
    - How quickly can we win the ball back?
    - Once we lose pressure drop back behind the ball
- (Cover)
  - If no pressure on the ball, defenders must drop
  - 2<sup>nd</sup> defender in a position where they can not be beat by penetration
    - Pass or dribble
  - If support is beaten by penetration then must drop back behind the ball.
- (Balance)
  - Next closest defender must be in an area to provide cover if initial pressure is broken.

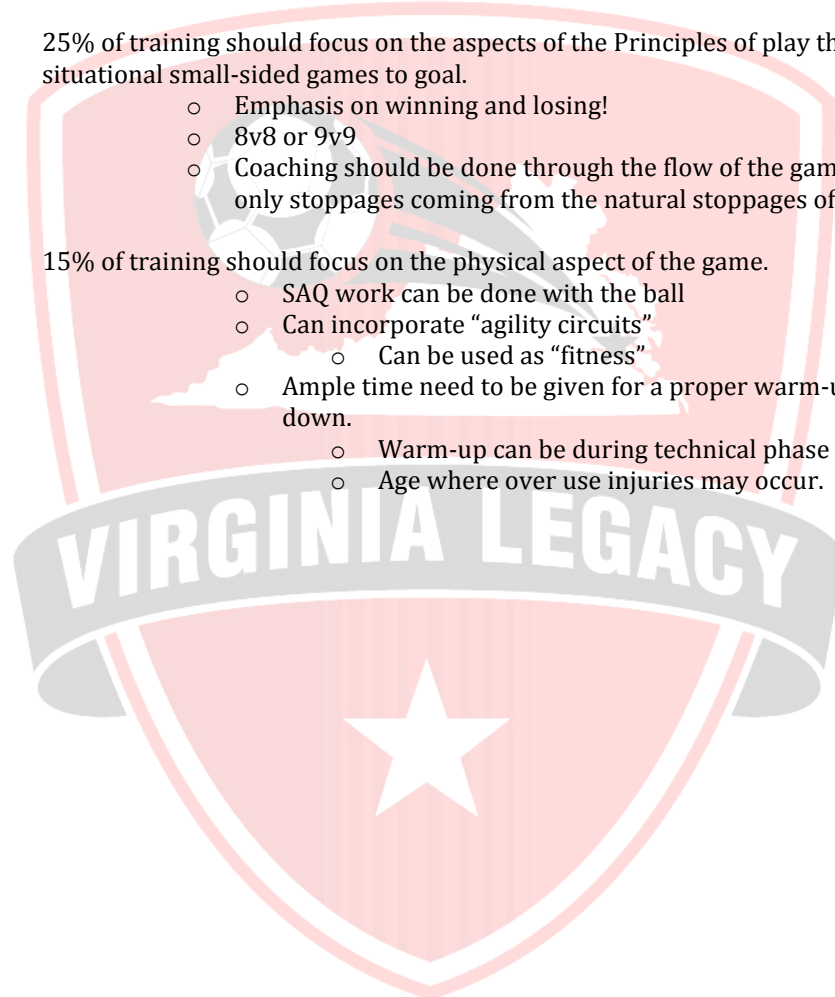
- Defender must track and be aware of attackers making forward runs to attack.
- Communication of when, where, who to pressure or when to drop.
- (Compactness)
  - Offside defenders must be in a position to provide cover and balance if pressure and cover are broken.
  - “Can we cut the field in half?”
  - Relationship between the lines is compact as we try to minimize space to attack.
  - Importance of recovery runs
    - Recover to the center

25% of training should focus on the aspects of the Principles of play through situational small-sided games to goal.

- Emphasis on winning and losing!
- 8v8 or 9v9
- Coaching should be done through the flow of the game with the only stoppages coming from the natural stoppages of the game.

15% of training should focus on the physical aspect of the game.

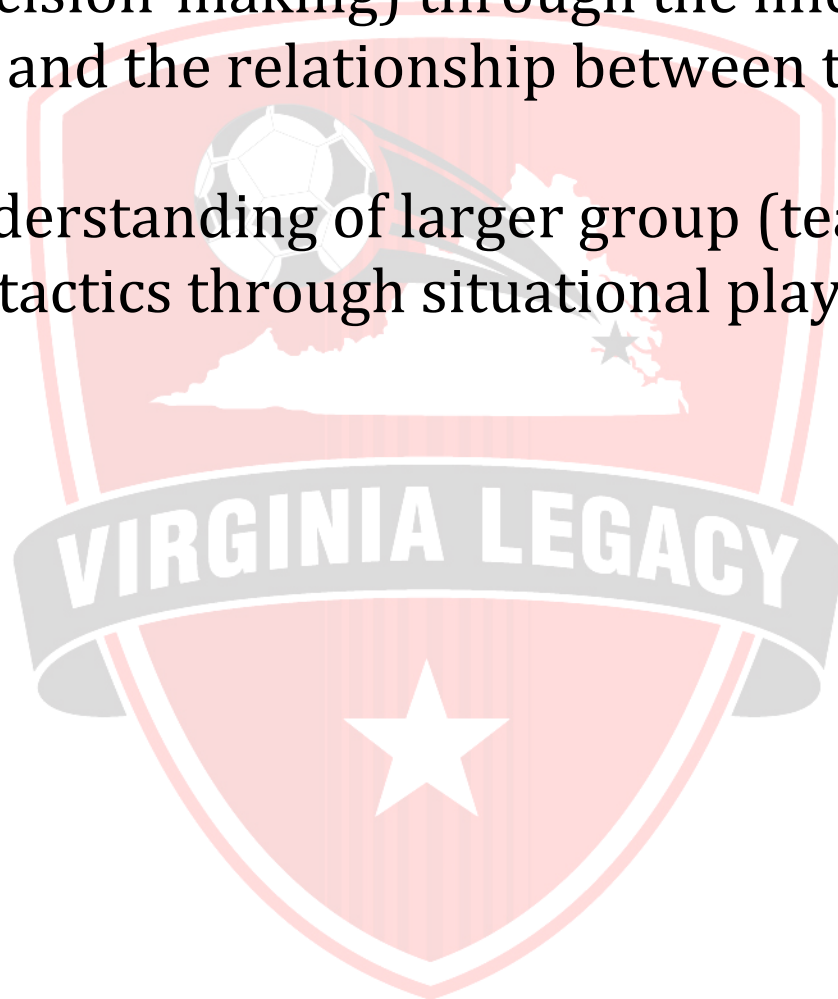
- SAQ work can be done with the ball
- Can incorporate “agility circuits”
  - Can be used as “fitness”
- Ample time need to be given for a proper warm-up and cool-down.
  - Warm-up can be during technical phase of training.
  - Age where over use injuries may occur.



## U16

Continued development of technical skill and speed under pressure. Continued development of tactical speed (decision-making) through the lines of play and the relationship between them.

Understanding of larger group (team) tactics through situational play.



<b>U16</b>	Continued development of technical skill and speed under pressure. Continued development of tactical speed (decision-making) through the lines of play and the relationship between them. Understanding of larger group (team) tactics through situational play.
<b>Coach:</b>	Coach must be a clear communicator and understand the different tactics that are involved in managing a match. They must understand how to recognize and apply themes and tactics that are witnessed throughout the flow of the game to their players. Must be a disciplinarian and have good managerial know how. Must be able to set team and personal goals and know what it takes to achieve such goals.
<b>Technique:</b>	All players at this age should have a solid technical base. If they do not it is the duty of the coach to bring everyone up to speed to continue to move forward. Tactical concepts will not be achieved at this age if the technical ability is not equaled. Skills should be mastered leading to artistry and technique should continue to be trained on the move. Players should be pushed to come as close to technical perfection as possible at game speed.
<b>Tactics:</b>	All sessions should be competitive in nature with clear winners and losers in activities. Functional work should become more routine in training sessions. Players should continue to broaden their knowledge of the attacking and defending principles of play. The understanding of possession with a purpose should be enforced, as well as the cues of when to high press and low press as a team unit. Applying the principles of play in situational activities where the players are forced to make quick decisions should increase tactical speed.
<b>Physical:</b>	Fitness work should be done both with and without the ball. Interval training, weight training, and plyometric exercises should be introduced as well. Nutrition plays a key role in a player's ability to perform at their highest level at these ages so proper education should be emphasized. It is unrealistic for players to always be at 100% percent. Players need to be honest with themselves and understand what levels their bodies will be able to perform. Coaches need to push the players to perform at 100% of what their bodies are able to put out (a player needs to be able to give 100% effort of the 60% their body is physically able to put out). This will help build mental toughness and players will truly understand how their bodies will work and react. Over use injuries are common at this age so proper nutritional and body maintenance (flexibility training) information is key.
<b>Mental/ Social</b>	<p>Players as they get older are able to increase their ability to concentrate so technical and tactical skills can be elaborated on. Proper leadership skills should be taught and players should understand the qualities that make up a good leader.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Here are some qualities that we look for in our leaders <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Confidence</li> <li>○ Commitment</li> <li>○ Accountability</li> <li>○ Honestly</li> <li>○ Great communication skills</li> <li>○ Discipline</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p>Players as well as coaches should set seasonal and yearly goals and understand that steps needed to achieve their goals. Players should be encouraged to get involved in high school soccer.</p>



## Training Priorities:

30% of training should focus on technical training. This can be done through possession type games with restrictions that put the player under game-like pressure. This can also be done through game-like functional training where game like technical ability is key for success. These activities should have real game scenarios.

- Ball manipulation should lead to ball mastery.
- Dribbling
  - Players should become completely comfortable with the ball at their feet in any situation
  - Players should be encouraged to take players on 1v1
    - Players should understand when to attack and when to possess
      - All parts of the field
- Ball Striking
  - Players should become proficient in striking the ball cleanly with all surfaces of their foot.
  - Distance and accuracy under pressure should be the focus

30% of training should incorporate the Principles of play that are appropriate for the age group to increase the players' tactical speed of play. These activities should involve direction (to a target of goals). Activities should have real game scenarios where the players are forced to think of possible outcomes

- **Clear winners and losers should be decided!**
- Examples of game situations
  - Playing against high Pressure vs. Low Pressure
  - Defending against high pressure vs. Low pressure
  - Attacking down the flanks
  - Recognizing and adapting to a change in formation
  - Playing against a direct style of play
  - Playing against a possession style of play
  - When to possess vs. when to attack
  - How and when to counter attack
  - How to play to a target forward
  - How to defend down the flanks
- **Attacking Principles**
  - **Possession with a purpose should continue to be taught at this age.**
    - **Understanding how and when to attack**
  - **Players are encouraged to play out of the back but must learn to read the cues when to play short and when to go long.**
  - **Attacking responsibilities on set pieces should be worked on**
  - (Penetration)
    - Players should be encouraged to take players on 1v1 when appropriate
      - Isolation
      - To get a shot off
      - To retain possession

- Give and Go's (recognition of creating numbers up and numbers down situations)
- Overlaps (recognition of creating numbers up and numbers down situations)
- Driven/chipped balls into forwards feet
- Driven/chipped balls into space
- Bent balls around the flanks
- (Support)
  - How quickly can we create numbers around the ball?
  - Recognition of creating numbers up and numbers down situations
    - Do we attack vs. do we possess?
  - Creating triangles around the ball
  - Attacking in a diamond
- (Width/Depth)
  - All players should know the responsibilities at each position
    - Forwards - provide **length** ahead of the ball
    - Defenders - provide **depth** behind the ball
    - Flank players - provide **width** on the sides of the ball
- (Mobility)
  - Promote the interchanging of positions!
  - Players off the ball need to unbalance the defense
    - Running into positions to create scoring opportunities
      - On and off the ball
    - Creating numbers up situations in support of the ball.
- (Improvisation)
  - Introduction and encouragement of players using their individual skills to create opportunities.
- **Defensive Principles**
  - **Players should start to recognize when to high and low press and the cues that dictate each.**
  - **Continued development of zonal marking**
    - **Development of the understanding of the relationship between lines**
      - **How they interact**
        - **Defender to Midfielders**
        - **Midfielders to Strikers**
  - **Communication is key from the 1<sup>st</sup> defender to the last.**
    - **Who has ball**
    - **Which way to be cover**
    - **Do we high press or low press**
- (Pressure)
  - Understanding when to press and when to drop
    - How quickly can we win the ball back?
    - Once we lose pressure drop back behind the ball
- (Cover)
  - If no pressure on the ball defenders must drop
  - 2<sup>nd</sup> defender in a position where they can not be beat by penetration
    - Pass or dribble

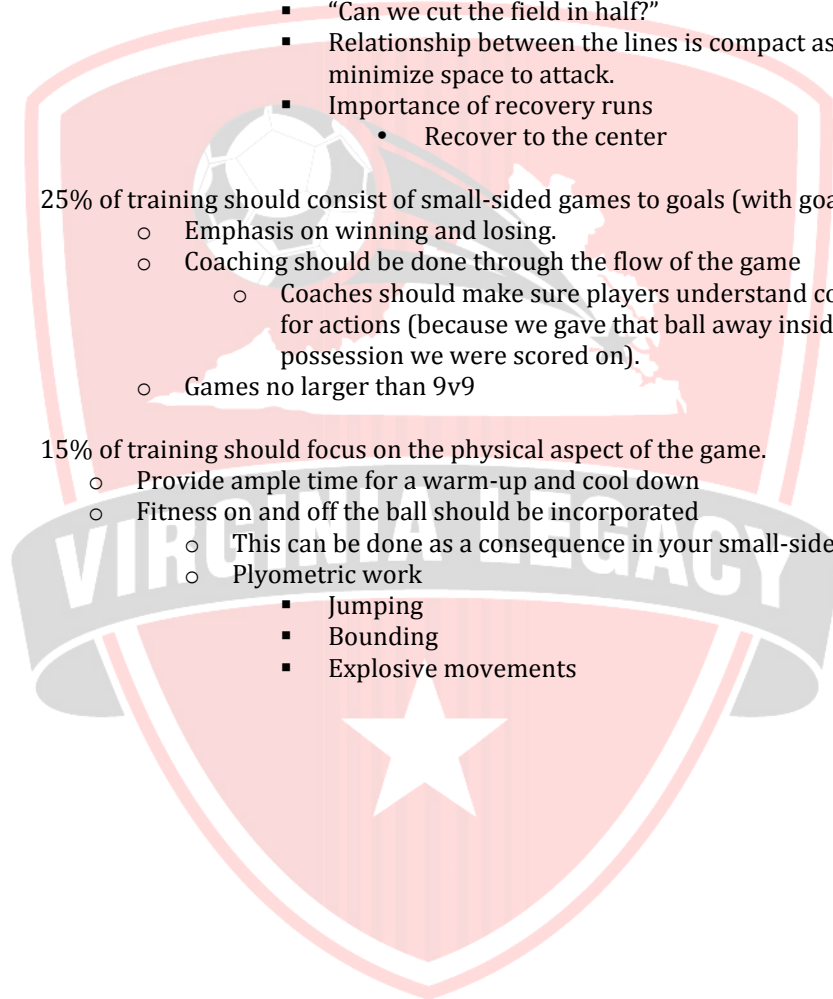
- If support is beaten by penetration then must drop back behind the ball.
- (Balance)
  - Next closest defender must be in an area to provide cover in case initial pressure is broken.
  - Defender must track and be aware of attackers making forward runs to attack.
  - Communication of when, where, who to pressure or when to drop.
- (Compactness)
  - Outside defenders must be in a position to provide cover and balance if pressure and cover are broken.
  - “Can we cut the field in half?”
  - Relationship between the lines is compact as we try to minimize space to attack.
  - Importance of recovery runs
    - Recover to the center

25% of training should consist of small-sided games to goals (with goalkeepers)

- Emphasis on winning and losing.
- Coaching should be done through the flow of the game
  - Coaches should make sure players understand consequences for actions (because we gave that ball away inside of keeping possession we were scored on).
- Games no larger than 9v9

15% of training should focus on the physical aspect of the game.

- Provide ample time for a warm-up and cool down
- Fitness on and off the ball should be incorporated
  - This can be done as a consequence in your small-sided play.
  - Plyometric work
    - Jumping
    - Bounding
    - Explosive movements

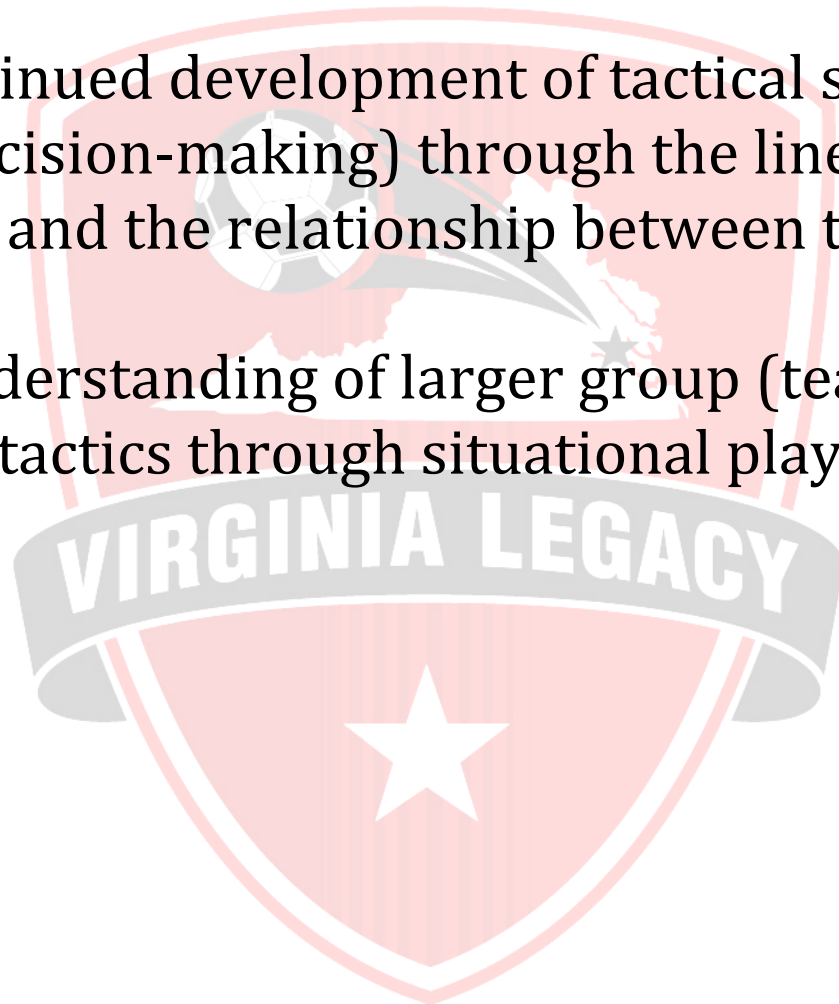


## U18

Continued development of technical skill,  
and speed, under pressure.

Continued development of tactical speed  
(decision-making) through the lines of  
play and the relationship between them.

Understanding of larger group (team)  
tactics through situational play.



**U18** Development of Positional and Team play through functional training and game-like scenarios.

**Coach:** Coach must be knowledgeable of in-game tactics and comfortable in the recognition and adjustments involved to create success for the team. Coaches should continue to place focus on technical proficiency and precision, game insight, and the individual's responsibility for improving their abilities. Coaches must demand excellence. It is important that the concepts and tactics addressed in practiced are reinforced during game play. Coaches must possess the knowledge of how to pinpoint a player's flaws and how to improve it. **Demanding and challenging training sessions and matches are a must.**

**Technique:** A player's technical blueprint is almost complete. Any growth, from this point forward, is largely related to how the player has developed up to this point. Refining of skills is the key. Skills should be mastered at all speeds and match conditions. Players should be demanded to be as close to perfect as possible. Technique should be taught through functional activities as well. Excellence must be demanded.

**Tactics:** Understanding of the relationships both, attacking and defensively, must be emphasized. Functional play and training is very important to building a visual framework for players. Non-functional activities that challenge the players to recognize tactical themes should be stressed. Players should be encouraged to be creative in the attack and disciplined in defense.

**Physical:** Flexibility work should continue to be stressed. Nutrition education should be addressed prior to and after training sessions and matches. Agility, endurance, and speed training, with and without the ball, should be stressed. Fitness work can and should be done through games that mimic game play. Fitness testing and training should be conducted as well.

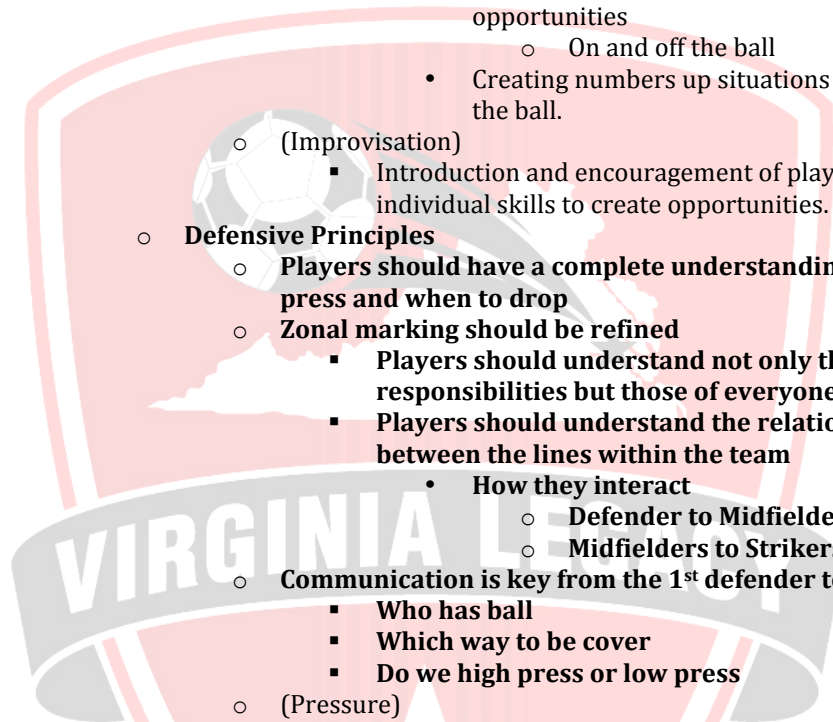
**Mental/  
Social:** Increased concentration allows for a broader depth of tactical speed and technical ability. Players should be encouraged to be good leaders and role models. They should be encouraged to help out in the community as well with youth soccer programs within the club. Through such activities accountability, leadership, and discipline can be taught. All players should be encouraged to set seasonal and yearly goals, both on and off the field, and understand the steps that are needed to achieve these goals. Players should continue to be encouraged to get involved in high school soccer and watch high-level soccer on TV.

**Training  
Priorities:**

50% of training should consist of technical training being honed through game-like activities that challenge the player to make decisions at game speed. Players should also understand the relationship between the playing lines

- Players should be asked to solve real match problems
  - Through scenarios placed about the activity by the coach
    - Score off a cross
    - High press
    - Low press
  - Functional activities – technical work should be done at game speed
    - Examples
      - Playing out of the back
      - Attacking down the flanks
      - When to press and when to drop
      - Defending in and around the penalty box
      - Counter Attacking
      - Defending service from the flanks
      - Attacking service from the flanks
    - Non-Functional principle based activities
      - **All players should have a complete understanding of the principles of play**
      - **Numbers up and numbers down situations are encouraged to create realistic game-like situations where players will have to adapt.**
    - **Attacking Principles**
      - **Players should be looking to start the attack quickly and understand the cues on how to do so.**
        - **Playing out of the back vs. going long**
        - **When to possess and when to attack**
        - **When, where, and how to counter attack**
      - **Attacking responsibilities on set pieces should be addressed**
      - (Penetration)
        - Players should be encouraged to take players on 1v1 when appropriate
        - **Players should be encouraged to be creative in the attack**
          - Isolation
          - To get a shot off
          - To retain possession
          - Give and Go's (recognition of creating numbers up and numbers down situations)
          - Overlaps (recognition of creating numbers up and numbers down situations)
        - Driven/chipped balls into forwards feet
        - Driven/chipped balls into space
        - Bent balls around the flanks
      - (Support)
        - How quickly can we create numbers around the ball?
        - Recognition of creating numbers up and numbers down situations
          - Do we attack vs. do we possess?
        - Creating triangles around the ball

- Attacking in a diamond
- (Width/Depth)
  - All players should know the responsibilities at each position
    - Forwards - provide **length** ahead of the ball
    - Defenders – provide **depth** behind the ball
    - Flank players – provide **width** on the sides of the ball
- (Mobility)
  - Promote the interchanging of positions!
  - Players off the ball need to unbalance the defense
    - Running into positions to create scoring opportunities
      - On and off the ball
    - Creating numbers up situations in support of the ball.
- (Improvisation)
  - Introduction and encouragement of players using their individual skills to create opportunities.
- **Defensive Principles**
  - **Players should have a complete understanding of when to press and when to drop**
  - **Zonal marking should be refined**
    - **Players should understand not only their roles and responsibilities but those of everyone on the field**
    - **Players should understand the relationship between the lines within the team**
      - **How they interact**
        - **Defender to Midfielders**
        - **Midfielders to Strikers**
  - **Communication is key from the 1<sup>st</sup> defender to the last.**
    - **Who has ball**
    - **Which way to be cover**
    - **Do we high press or low press**
- (Pressure)
  - Understanding when to press and when to drop
    - How quickly can we win the ball back?
    - Once we lost pressure drop back behind the ball
- (Cover)
  - If no pressure on the ball defenders must drop
  - 2<sup>nd</sup> defender in a position where they can not be beat by penetration
    - Pass or dribble
  - If support is beaten by penetration then must drop back behind the ball.
- (Balance)
  - Next closest defender must be in an area to provide cover in case initial pressure is broken.
  - Defender must track and be aware of attackers making forward runs to attack.
  - Communication of when, where, who to pressure or when to drop.
- (Compactness)



- Outside defenders must be in a position to provide cover and balance if pressure and cover are broken.
- “Can we cut the field in half?”
- Relationship between the lines is compact as we try to minimize space to attack.
- Importance of recovery runs
  - Recover to the center

40% of training should consist of small-sided games that invoke match situation problem solving.

- Games should always have a winner and a loser.
- Players should be asked to solve real problems that they will face in a match.
  - Should be done through coaches comments
  - Should be done by scenarios put upon the match
    - Man up/Man down
- Coaching should be done through the flow of the game with natural stoppages be the only time play is stopped.

10% of training should focus on the physical aspect of the game.

- Fitness test can be done.
  - Cooper Test
  - Beep Test
- Fitness should be included through the flow of play in training activities
  - Players should play as close to game speed to become comfortable performing at fatigued levels
- Ample times should be allotted for proper warm-up and cool downs
  - Warm-ups can be done in the functional/non-functional portion of training.

