

Coaching in Youth Football

'Some Practice Advice'



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Adults joining in with training – Poor Practice

Adults still continue to join in with the Children's training which is poor practice as they are there to coach.

Below you will find some solutions to prevent this from happening and also why the is deemed poor practice.

Poor Practice Examples	Best Practice Alternatives
<p>Uneven Numbers Not only is this unsafe because of the relative 'size' and strength of an adult, it also means the children get less touches of the ball and face unrealistic situations that they wouldn't face on a match day.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• If there are uneven numbers play half the game with one team having the over load and then change the overload to the other team half way through. Ask which players would like to play with less players, this team can then receive extra points/goals for having less players.• 1 child to volunteer to become a floating player, this player is on whichever team has the ball. Switch the child who is the floater on a regular basis so all the children have a go at being the floater.• DO NOT HAVE PLAYERS SITTING OUT. (Unless they are injured)



The real game rarely sees both teams evenly matched with players in attacking/defending situations therefore this will help them deal being out numbered and also help them understand how to make the most of out numbering their opponent.

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Appropriate Coaching Activities

The following situations have been witnessed by Durham County FA staff when out visiting Clubs across the County.

Poor Practice Examples

- Young players (Pre-puberty – U7 – U13) made to run up and down a steep grass hill repetitively. The coach claimed “it would work on the fitness and stamina” this will not help their fitness/stamina at this young age as their bodies aren’t developed enough and can do more harm than good, plus they are not required to run in that way on a pitch.
- Young players (Pre-puberty – U7 – U13) made to play a 4 v 4 (1 of the 4 being the coach) game in training using a 3rd of a full 3G Pitch. This distance they were covering was inappropriate and also unrealistic, the children will not have this much space on a match day therefore it’s an unrealistic challenge.
- Children standing in a long line waiting to take a shot at goal, they serve the ball into the coach who lays it off, they have a shot and wait minutes until their next shot. This isn’t inclusive, reduces the number of touches on the ball, in fact the person who has the most touches of the ball is the Coach!
- Warm ups resulting in the children doing laps of the pitch or running across the pitch in a straight line, these movements are neither realistic nor enjoyable for the children.
- Activities that require the children to be standing around for prolonged periods of time without a ball should be avoided.

Best Practice Alternatives

- Spend more time allowing the children to practice with the ball at their feet and in little game related activities which encourages them problem solve.
- Use a much smaller area to play 3 v 4 or 3 v 3 with a floater.
- Use variable and random practices which increases decision making for all the players and which also decreases players becoming distracted and disruptive.
- Games of tag/tiggy are excellent for warm ups, not only are they enjoyable they will help develop the **FUND**amental movements of the child.
- Children should be involved and active as much as possible and allowed to have lots of touches of the ball in order to develop their technique.

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Training and Match Days

The following behaviour has been witnessed by Durham County FA staff:

Poor Practice Examples

- Coaches showing negative behaviour and reactions to children making mistakes. Children don't make mistakes on purpose and are trying their best.
- Often Coaches/Managers and other adults have unrealistic expectations of children and expect them to play the game as an adult would however they don't have the same expectations outside of football, for example when at home or when doing homework, a child in a music class at school is not a musician but a child learning music, the same applies to football.
- Results over performance – too many coaches place more importance on the result of the game rather than the performance and development of the child. We should never say winning isn't important because it is but in grassroots youth football it should never be the main focus.
- Aggressive and intimidating behaviour from adults on the side lines.
- Children not wearing appropriate winter training kit.

Best Practice – Things to Remember

- Life is about making mistakes and some of the best learning opportunities come from mistakes therefore players should not be criticised but encouraged to keep trying. Coaches should support players during training and games and use them as learning opportunities.
- Coaches and other adults should remember children are learning the game and are not mini adults or professional football players.
- Losing a game can be just as important as winning the game as it helps the child understand what it takes to win and also appreciate it when they do win.
- We as adults should focus more on the performance as results will improve as the children develop technically. This will reduce the pressure placed on the children from the adults and in turn will encourage the children to express themselves and learn from their own mistakes.
CHILDREN ARE PLAYING FOR THEIR PLEASURE NOT OURS!
- Remember to use codes of conduct aligned to the FA Respect Programme.
- Children do not regulate their body temperature as well as adults and are therefore more at risk to Cold conditions. Warm clothing must be encouraged at all times during cold/poor weather conditions.

Remember they are **CHILDREN** not professional footballers!!

Coaching in Youth Football Coach Education & Development



Coach Education and Development

Durham County FA are committed to the education and development of grassroots coaches across Durham County. We provide a number of formal coach education course plus a regular programme of FREE CPD Events for coaches to attend.

For information about the courses we provide please click the image below.



For information about the FREE CPD Events we deliver please click the image below.

