

NAAS AFC



Guided Discovery
Coaching
Under 12 Age Group

U.12



What I'm trying to do at the club is to create an environment in which it's possible to succeed. Football is a constant education. I am presenting ideas to the club not mandates, and the good people we have at the club are ably assisting me. A good coach has to constantly adjust.

Naas Schoolboys Player Characteristics U.12

1. Mental (Psychological)
2. Physical
3. Social

1. Mental (Psychological)

- ⇒ This is a very fertile period for learning (they are eager to learn)
- ⇒ They have the ability to sequence thought and actions and can perform more complex tasks
- ⇒ They can simultaneously run, kick a ball and think
- ⇒ They have the ability to meet more abstract thought which helps them meet the demands of the game (a well timed overlapping run)
- ⇒ They use their team mates to solve game problems, therefore training must replicate the game

2. Physical

- ⇒ They continue to gain a tremendous amount of physical strength, endurance and power
- ⇒ Flexibility training is key to prevention of injury
- ⇒ They are more confident with physical and technical demands above their waist (receiving with the chest and heading the ball)
- ⇒ Goalkeeping skills are becoming refined
- ⇒ The height of U.12 players can be well over 5ft and weight can be 100lbs or more
- ⇒ The age range for the beginning of puberty in girls is 7 – 14 yrs with the average being 10 years, in boys the range is 9 – 16 yrs with the average being 12 years

3. Social

- ⇒ They spend more time with their friends and less time with their parents
- ⇒ They tend to conform to peer pressure
- ⇒ They are developing a conscience, morality and scale of values



Guided Discovery Principles

- ✓ Teaching method where the coach asks meaningful questions of the players to draw out specific information that will help the players to solve problems that they are faced with in the game.
- ✓ Guided discovery coaching environment fosters independent thinking by facilitating player solutions rather than coach force fed solutions.
- ✓ Goals of effective questioning:
 - Actively involve the players in their learning process
 - Enhance task mastery
 - Enhance their conceptual understanding
 - Promote both simple and complex thinking
 - Use of **LOW ORDER** and **HIGH ORDER** questions

Asking Meaningful Questions

Coaches must be skilled in the art of “asking meaningful questions.” This will give players the opportunity to practice problem solving and will help them to become more capable of solving problems that arise in training sessions and matches. The use of low-order and high-order questions is necessary during training sessions. It is important for coaches to understand both types of questions and to apply them appropriately. Use of high-order questions will provide players more opportunities for self-evaluation; leading to being soccer intelligent.

Low Order Questions

1. What part of the foot do you use to make a short pass?
2. Where should you aim when shooting on goal?
3. Now, if you want to make sure your teammate goes forward, where do you want the pass to go?

High Order Questions

1. How can we get the ball downfield quickly?
2. Why should we play high-pressure defence?
3. In a 3v3 situation, what’s the best way to get the ball to your teammate? Let’s try it!
4. What happens when you pass the ball behind your teammate? Let’s try it?

Coaches will have to understand both the high and low order questions and apply them appropriately. **Why** and **How** questions enhance the players’ ability to make decisions, one of the central goals of empowerment.

“Asking the right questions takes as much skill as giving the right answers.”

Goals of Effective Questioning

- ⇒ Actively involving players in the learning process
- ⇒ Enhancing their task mastery
- ⇒ Enhancing their conceptual understanding
- ⇒ Promoting both simple (low-order) and complex (high-order) thinking

Encompassing Goal of Naas Schoolboys

Our goal is to develop more “soccer intelligent” players who are more self-reliant during a match. Players consistently coached with this method will be more adaptable to the demands of the game. This coaching method is also likely to produce more creative players. The best players in the world put thought and energy into developing techniques and styles of play best suited to their individual talents. We are rarely taught conditionally. Being mindful, using imagination and creativity to learn what works best for you, is what makes the difference between an average player and a champion. When players see that there’s more than one technical or tactical solution to each situation, they become mindful. The way you cultivate mindfulness is to realise that information about the game, around and in you, is endlessly interesting and it looks different from different perspectives. But many coaches and players operate mindlessly, pursuing routines (drills) rather than looking for new details around them. The results can be disastrous! When the atmosphere at a training session is permeated with positive interaction, creativity and well timed questions then players will arrive at training already mentally alert. It is then more likely that even easily distracted players will stay on task a bit longer. In many ways using guided discovery as a will be more difficult than using the command style. To guide players the coach must actually know the destination. To ask appropriate questions requires deeper knowledge of the training session topic by the coach. It is useful for the coach to write some questions on the lesson plan coaching points. These questions should appear in the written lesson plan that a coach should prepare for each training session. It is important for coaches to allow players to think about questions and help encourage them to find the answers. If players are having difficulty with a question a coach can redirect or rephrase a high-order question so they can think carefully about what has been asked.

Active Learning

Active learning means that the player is involved in what he/she is doing and not merely a passive observer of what is going on. For example, when new material is being tackled, the technique of Guided Discovery Teaching is employed; the player is directed by means of questions, tasks, training games and so on to discover the new information for him/her. He/she then participates in the processing of the information in a memorable form (e.g. answering guided questions); he/she immediately practices it (e.g. by game-like activities) and has opportunities to use it (e.g. by small-sided games) and to extend the skill (e.g. by matches). By contrast with passive learning the player may remember 18% in long-term memory. With active learning many players will remember 68% in long-term memory. To achieve this systematic process I will be asking you to be aware of two types of activities I hope all coaches will implement with their teams.



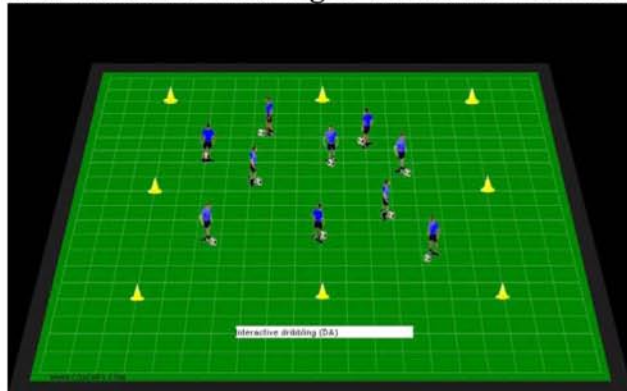
Activities

- ⇒ **Dynamic Activities** – players are constantly moving at various speeds unopposed
- ⇒ **Dynamic Competitive Activities** – consistently moving at various speeds with opposition (pressure from opponents)

U.12 players are in the middle of golden years of learning with even greater intellect and physical ability they possessed at U.10. Therefore the focus must be on technical proficiency and speed as well as more complicated tactical situations. The role of the coach in the U.12 age group is to be a patient motivating teacher. At this level in addition to understanding technique coaches should be able to provide environments conducive to problem solving by the players utilising guided discovery methods. Specifically individual and small group tactics should be the focus of the training sessions.

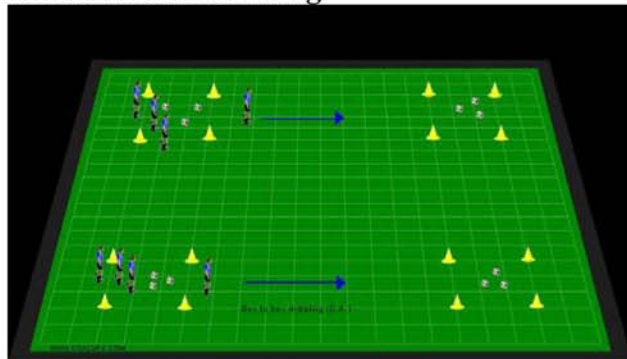
Dynamic Activities (Interactive activities, no opponents)

1. Interactive dribbling to introduce takeovers



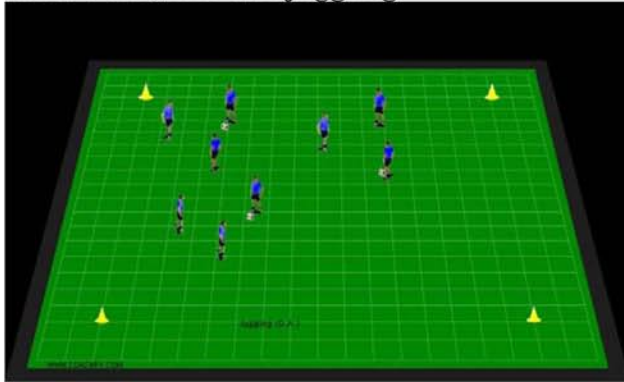
- ⇒ Dribble with your head up
- ⇒ Stop and go moves
- ⇒ Half turns with change of pace, sole of foot chop etc.
- ⇒ Can we work on splitting players with the dribble (speed)
- ⇒ Introduce takeovers
- ⇒ Takeovers should happen early and players should communicate

2. Box to box dribbling



- ⇒ Like a relay race and you can create competition
- ⇒ You can work on speed dribbling or pure speed
- ⇒ Dribble the ball and stop in the boxes
- ⇒ Quick half turns

3. Two one, one-two juggling



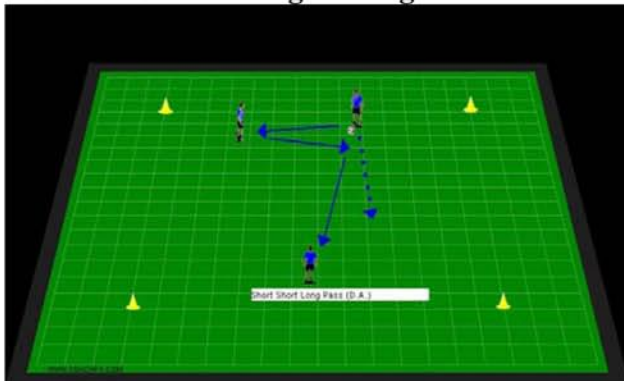
- ⇒ Player serves to one player saying two one he takes two touches to the other players one
- ⇒ Work on preparation touches and set up your team mate
- ⇒ Let the players coach each other
- ⇒ Let each group challenge themselves

4. Middle man receiving



- ⇒ Pass to middle player and will do a sharp turn
- ⇒ Receive it turn and pass it
- ⇒ Work on technique and don't let players go to fast to quickly
- ⇒ Use inside and outside of foot
- ⇒ Give every player a chance
- ⇒ Add a check away before receiving
- ⇒ Serve high balls

5. Short -Short- Long Passing



- ⇒ Develop rhythm in assign and communication
- ⇒ Two players play short passes and then play long pass
- ⇒ One player then goes and support the long pass
- ⇒ Get players to face direction of pass (forward) to set themselves up (open up)

6. Inter Passing in Groups



- ⇒ Get the players to focus in on shape
- ⇒ Give players responsibility to lead the group (give them a directive)
- ⇒ Add another team and both teams can start playing through each other
- ⇒ Tell the players you would like to relate the passing to the game

Dynamic Competitive Activities – consistently moving at various speeds with opposition (pressure from opponents)

1. Timed 4 v 2 keep away



- ⇒ Four players in the grid try to keep the ball away from the two defenders
- ⇒ If the defenders win the ball they get out of the grid and the other two defenders come in
- ⇒ Give each team eight balls and see how long it takes for them to win back (time each team)
- ⇒ Adjust size of area appropriately
- ⇒ Play three or four times per round
- ⇒ In this game the players will face 3 pressures, opponent, time, space

2. Small sided games with free flank players



- ⇒ Players play 4 v 4 in the middle with wide players playing for both teams in the flank
- ⇒ Encourage players to pass wide so as to create crossing opportunities
- ⇒ Wide players have a total of three touches
- ⇒ The free wide players will help us get more crosses into the game
- ⇒ Encourage positive forward touches by the wide players
- ⇒ Crosses to go behind the defense

3. Zone 1 v 2 + 1 v 2 Competition



- ⇒ Front men look to score at every opportunity
- ⇒ Play within your own half
- ⇒ Create a 2 v 2 after pass
- ⇒ Encourage players to open up their body position
- ⇒ Use the keeper to create a 3 v 1 in building up
- ⇒ Coach the front man to get behind the defenders and show for the ball late (right time)
- ⇒ Front man must find a way to keep possession of the ball

4. Zone 2 v 3 + 2 v 3 Competition



- ⇒ Front men combine to score
- ⇒ Front men to stretch the grid and make the pitch as big as they can
- ⇒ Front men need to stay close to work combinations
- ⇒ If player passes ball into front men he can follow his pass to create a 3 v 2

5. The game 7 v 7 + 1



- ⇒ Always finish with a game that they play at the weekend
- ⇒ Concentrate on team shape attacking (long and wide) defending (short and tight)

Summary

Please create an appropriate playing and training environment, allow solutions to soccer problems to come from within the players themselves. Use meaningful questions to facilitate this process in other words use **GUIDED DISCOVERY**. Remember that at the U.12 level training looks more like the game on a smaller scale, fun is still very important so continue to do fun activities that promote movement and comfort with the ball.

End Notes

1. The training session should involve fun and imaginative game like activities
2. The training session should have a technical and/ or tactical theme e.g. dribbling technique and/ or 1 v1 decision making
3. Introduction to functional training is appropriate
4. Small sided directional games such as 4 v 4, 5 v 4, 5 v 5, 6 v 5, 6 v 6 and 7 v 6 should be included as well. Use simple explanations regarding shape and formations.
5. Training should always conclude with an 8 v 8 game
6. The duration of the training should be 60-80 mins

Lesson Plan Design

The U.12 training session should consist of about 6-8 activities. There should be a mixture of warm up, dynamic, dynamic competitive activities and cool down. The design would be as follows:

1. Warm Up Activities
2. Stretching Activities
3. Dynamic Activity
4. Dynamic Stretching Activity
5. Dynamic Competitive Activity
6. Dynamic Competitive Activity
7. Dynamic Competitive Activity
8. Cool Down Activities

Sample Lesson Plan

1. Inter passing in groups
2. Stretching
3. Passing by numbers
4. Dynamic Stretching
5. Middle man receiving
6. 4 v 4 + 1 to end zones
7. The game 8 v 8
8. 1 -2 or 2 – 1 juggling

Coaches paint pictures -
the simpler the better

