

NAAS AFC



Guided Discovery
Coaching
Under 8 Age Group

U.8

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.8

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

1. Mental (Psychological)

- ⇒ Short attention span
- ⇒ Love to use their imagination and pretend
- ⇒ Limited ability to tend to more than one task
- ⇒ Beginning to solve simple soccer problems (passing)
- ⇒ Some understanding of time and space relations

2. Physical

- ⇒ Beginning to develop physical co-ordination
- ⇒ Improvement in pace regulation
- ⇒ Skeletal system is growing (growth plates are near the joints)
- ⇒ Cardiovascular system is less efficient than adults
- ⇒ Heart rate peaks sooner and takes longer to recover
- ⇒ Catching skills still not developed
- ⇒ Improvement in dribbling and kicking
- ⇒ They love to run, jump, fall and role (ABCs)

3. Social

- ⇒ Self concept of body image beginning to develop
- ⇒ They are sensitive and dislike personal failure
- ⇒ Negative comments from peers and adults carry great weight
- ⇒ Limited experience of personal evaluation
- ⇒ Effort is synonymous with successful performance
- ⇒ Inclined toward co-operative activities (small groups)
- ⇒ Establish and co-operate with friends
- ⇒ They desire social acceptance
- ⇒ They want everyone to like them
- ⇒ Influenced by parents
- ⇒ Love to play soccer and are intrinsically motivated
- ⇒ Play to enjoy and have fun

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 Soccer

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 three types of activities I hope all coaches will implement with their teams.

Activities

- ⇒ **Dynamic Activities** – players are constantly moving at various speeds unopposed
- ⇒ **Relaxation Activities** – challenging and slower paced activities to allow rest
- ⇒ **Dynamic Competitive** – consistently moving at various speeds with opposition (pressure from opponents)

Dynamic Activities (Interactive activities, no opponents)

1. Interactive dribbling



- ⇒ Dribble with your head up
- ⇒ Stop and go moves
- ⇒ Half turns with change of pace, sole of foot chop etc.
- ⇒ Good ability to manipulate and move the ball
- ⇒ Adjust size of grid according to size of group

2. Maths dribble game



- ⇒ Dribble round grid until you hear coach yell out a number
- ⇒ If 3 is called the players should get in groups of 3s touching balls
- ⇒ Use maths equations EG $3+2$, $3+1-2$ to let players solve problem

3. Line dribbling



- ⇒ Inside scissors using both legs
- ⇒ Let the players try specific moves along the line
- ⇒ Coach can observe moves from side
- ⇒ Dribble good and fast half turns

4. Fetch



- ⇒ Coach throws ball away and players go and collect them
- ⇒ Collect individually
- ⇒ Collect as partners
- ⇒ Bring the ball back in four passes
- ⇒ Bring the ball back with a hand and a foot

5. Gate dribbling with keepers



- ⇒ Players dribble through gates at various speeds
- ⇒ Add keepers to gates alternatively
- ⇒ Players to look up when dribbling
- ⇒ Time 20 sec dribbles with and without keepers
- ⇒ Players keep score

5. Passing in Pairs



- ⇒ Pass ball back and forth with one or two touches
- ⇒ Ball cannot stop moving
- ⇒ Players feet cannot stop moving
- ⇒ Accurate passing to feet
- ⇒ Always look at the ball when striking it
- ⇒ Keep ball under control
- ⇒ Lock ankles and place non kicking foot beside the ball
- ⇒ Progress to moving pass and players stay connected
- ⇒ Simple exercise in support play
- ⇒ Actively find another partner with and without the ball



6. Body Tag



- ⇒ 2 Players use balls to tag
- ⇒ Change taggers frequently
- ⇒ Divide players into two teams
- ⇒ Keep all balls below knee
- ⇒ Use time to pressure players

7. Team Relay



- ⇒ Divide players into 4 groups
- ⇒ Players run, skip or hop into middle and dribble the ball back
- ⇒ Dribble, pass or chip ball back
- ⇒ Players can steal team mates ball
- ⇒ Good preparation touches
- ⇒ Fast half turns

8. Ball Control on the Deck



- ⇒ On toes, ready to receive the ball
- ⇒ Get in the line of the ball
- ⇒ Cushion control out of feet
- ⇒ Head up to assess pass
- ⇒ Accurate pass
- ⇒ Condition to two touches only
- ⇒ Players move along the line to progress

9. Tail Steel



- ⇒ Players tuck a bib into the back of their shorts.
- ⇒ Players dribble their soccer ball while trying to pluck the tails of other player.
- ⇒ Players play until the last tail is taken.
- ⇒ Play in teams

10. Snake Tag



- ⇒ All players dribble their soccer balls, except for 2- 3 players.
- ⇒ These players (the snake) hold hands or lock arms and work together to tag the other players.
- ⇒ Players with dribbling balls try to avoid getting tagged
- ⇒ If they are tagged, they join hands or lock arms with the snake.
- ⇒ The snake grows until all players are part of the snake. The snake must work together and not break into little parts.
- ⇒ Encourage fun by having the snake hiss. (8 minutes)



Relaxation Activities (challenging and slower paced activities to allow rest)

1. Serve to yourself and preparation touches



- ⇒ Serve to yourself and receive the ball out of the air
- ⇒ Lots of repetition
- ⇒ Dribble around grid and on coach shout pick the ball up and throw into air
- ⇒ Use thigh, foot, chest, head, laces
- ⇒ Cushion all touches and challenge the players to throw the ball higher

2. Do this do that?



- ⇒ Players face coach in no particular order
- ⇒ Coach as players to do this (mimic the coach) you do it
- ⇒ Coach asks the players to do that players must not do it
- ⇒ Improve player concentration and reactions

3. Co-ordination Activity



- ⇒ Players sit on ground and copy the coach in a series of co-ordinated moves
- ⇒ Create a good tempo to the session
- ⇒ Open arms and close legs quickly
- ⇒ Repeat exercises quickly and let players experiment

4. Bounce juggling



- ⇒ Players start with ball in their hands and juggle any way they want
- ⇒ Players are encouraged to let ball bounce
- ⇒ Keep juggling going with various parts of body
- ⇒ Put players on the stage to demonstrate
- ⇒ Players get plenty of touches
- ⇒ Thigh/ thigh, foot/ foot juggle

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

1. Combat



- ⇒ Players play 1 v 1 combat and get the ball back to the coach
- ⇒ Players have two ways to get ball back by dribble or pass
- ⇒ Players experiment with battles
- ⇒ Quickest way to get the ball back is by passing
- ⇒ Coach change position so players can look up
- ⇒ Players need to get ball back fast
- ⇒ Progress to 2v2, 3v3 etc.
- ⇒ Good activity to work the kids tactically

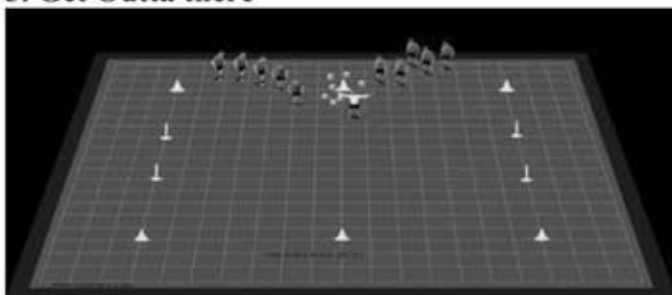
2. Bandit ball



- ⇒ Get players to win soccer balls
- ⇒ Encourage winning the balls over knocking them out
- ⇒ Time each round
- ⇒ 2 bandits start without a ball and then try to win a ball
- ⇒ Give points to players who finish with a ball

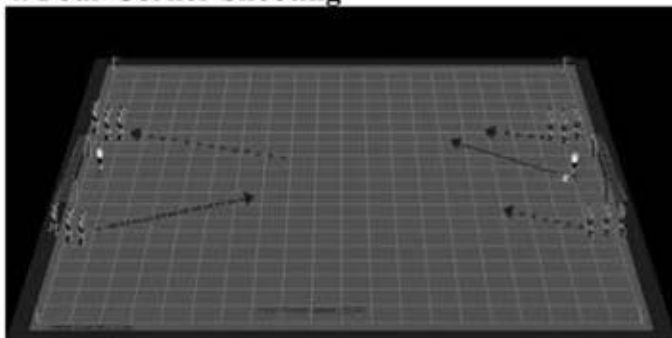


3. Get Outta there



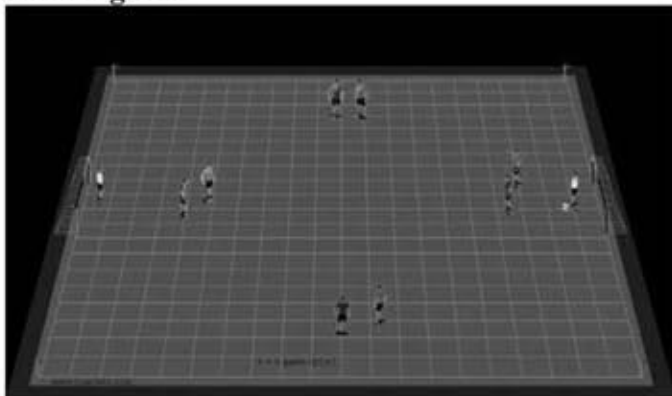
- ⇒ Players to finish on goals
- ⇒ Play 1 v 1 first then progress to 2 v 2, 3 v 3 etc.
- ⇒ Encourage players to experiment
- ⇒ Players score by dribbling or passing

4. Four Corner Shooting



- ⇒ Players love to score goals
- ⇒ Play 2 v 2
- ⇒ Encourage players to take plenty of shots
- ⇒ Keep tempo high
- ⇒ Don't forget to follow in rebounds

5. 4 v 4 game



- ⇒ Concentrate on team shape
- ⇒ Diamond shape is best, width and depth
- ⇒ Creates triangles for player passing
- ⇒ Let the game be the teacher for the players
- ⇒ Players need to move to create space
- ⇒ Let them enjoy the game

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.8 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. Sessions should consist of 3-4 dynamic activities, 1 or 2 relaxation activities and 3-4 dynamic competitive activities. Enjoy the opportunity you have to work with young players and enjoy watching them play.

End Notes

1. The training session should involve fun and imaginative game like activities
2. Light coaching on simple technique is appropriate (dribbling, passing & receiving)
3. Small-sided directional games such as 1v1, 2v1, 2v2, 3v2 and 3v3 should be included as well. Use simple explanations regarding shape and formations.
4. Training should always conclude with a 4v4 game with/ without goalkeepers
5. The duration of the training should be 60-70 mins

Lesson Plan Design

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

1. Dynamic Activity
2. Dynamic Activity
3. Dynamic Activity
4. Relaxation Activity
5. Dynamic Competitive Activity
6. Dynamic Competitive Activity

Sample Lesson Plan

1. Interactive dribbling
2. Math dribble
3. Gate dribble
4. Juggling
5. Get Outta' There
6. The Game 4v4

Coaches paint pictures – the simpler the better

