



# National Soccer Coaches Association of Canada

## The DISCOVERY phase The Golden Age of Learning

# U9

## Player Development Guidelines

**A player-centred approach** to coaching, where the child comes first. The major objective of this stage is to develop **physical literacy** - speed, agility, balance, co-ordination and basic soccer skills.

**A game-centred approach**, for optimal, holistic learning. All aspects of the game: technical, physical, tactical and game intelligence are developed through small-sided games that allow the opportunity to express enjoyment and develop skills through games.

**A Guided-Discovery approach** to learning, where the coach stimulates the players' game intelligence through effective questioning.



- This is the age of the skill hungry years. Motivationally, children are geared to learn skills at this time, therefore, this is an ideal opportunity for focusing on building the skills of the game onto the movement skills of the children.
- Players at this age start to move from the **how (technique)** to **when, where, with whom and against whom (skill – tactics)**.
- Using games-based approaches to skill-learning, and technical repetition, the emphasis will be on developing confidence with the ball and game-play related skills that will form the foundation of the players future participation in the game.
- Still a lot of individual play but the players start to understand that acting with the ball purposefully is necessary in order to be successful.
- Players start to develop a 'feeling' for team play, direction and opponent.
- Preference and talent for a specific position starts to show (but encourage everyone to still play in every position regularly!)
- Bigger goals with goalkeepers automatically appeals to aiming and shooting
- Improved speed, endurance, strength, and coordination
- Good visual memory

### The role of the Coach

- Sound Methodology, teaching techniques - General knowledge of football
- Emotional and technical leadership
- Organizational and communication skills
- Establishing team spirit
- Demonstration, implementation, correction
- Teaching by encouragement





# National Soccer Coaches Association of Canada

## U9 Training Guidelines

### Technical - Tactical

Continue to develop ball mastery in a larger environment with more teammates and opponents.

Develop dribbling 1v1 using different fakes, shielding, and changes of direction.

Develop ability to receive and control the ball.

Introduce decision making for the next play and apply proper technique.

Develop the ability to run with the ball to gain space.



Introduce combination plays.

Teach players the use of back passes to keep possession.

Introduce shooting skills

Develop a shooting ATTITUDE (confidence).

Introduce simple defending skills:  
1 v 1 jockeying

### Develop Awareness and Vision through small sided games and **Street Soccer**.

**Small-Sided Games** are soccer games with fewer players competing on a smaller sized field. 1v1 - 2v1 - 3v2 - 4v4 are all fun games that involve the players more because one ball is being shared by fewer players.

All ages can play "**Small Sided Games**", but it has a greater impact on our younger soccer players because it presents an appropriate environment for the developing soccer players.

Here are some of the reasons why we believe that our young soccer players will develop **Vision and Creativity** by playing small-sided games and street Soccer.

1. Young soccer players are able to touch the soccer ball more often and become more skilful with it! (**Individual technical development**)
2. Young soccer players are able to make more, less-complicated decisions during the game! (**Tactical development**)
3. Young soccer players become more physically efficient in the space they are playing in (**Reduced field size**)
4. Young soccer players can have more individual teaching time with the coach! (**Need to feel worthy...need to feel important**)
5. Young soccer players have more opportunities to be involved in the game! (**More opportunity to solve problems**)
6. Young soccer players have more opportunities to play on both sides of the ball! (**More exposure to attacking and defending situations**)
7. Young soccer players will have more opportunities to score goals! (**Pure excitement**)
8. The **Street Soccer** program (5v5) focuses on **enjoyment** and **freedom of expression** in the formative years of a player's development (develop a more **Creative confident Player**)

Develop the "**Diamond Shape**" formation to teach the concepts of Width and Depth and understand "triangles" in soccer.

Introduce and Develop support play for ball carrier. Players adjust their positioning on their line to make themselves available for the ball carrier. Teach supporting players to run into spaces.

Introduce getting goal side and proper angles.

Introduce the tactic of the player defending against the ball carrier and the first cover.

### Physical Literacy

Appropriate and correct running, jumping and throwing techniques are taught using the ABC's of athletics (Agility, Balance, Co-ordination, Speed).

The development of these fundamental movement skills will contribute significantly to the athletic development and future achievements.

Participation in other sports is encouraged, however, players must also participate in the soccer program in order to develop their soccer related skills and technique.

