



L.T.P.D.  
long term player development

# Learn to Train "The golden age"



**For coaches of U8 to U11 females  
& U9 to U12 males**



# The Golden Age

Coach, skill development at this stage should be well structured, positive and FUN and should concentrate on developing the ABC's of Agility, Balance and Coordination plus speed. Encourage your players to take part in unstructured play, every day, with their friends.

Learning to read the movements going on around them are critical skills to be developed at this age. Playing small-sided games, 3v3, 4v4 etc. can develop players' ability to read what other players are going to do based on their movements. Let your players make decisions, expose them to working out problems and coming up with solutions.

## Practice Focus

Coach, the above chart indicates how your practice sessions should be structured for players in the Learn To Train development stage. Practice duration should range between 45 and 70 minutes.

**Warm up** - Getting the players prepared to practice and play, mentally and physically. Incorporate various dynamic movements.

**Small-sided Game 1** - Two teams e.g. 5v5 play with direction and targets. Just let them play!

**Technical** - Pick a theme e.g. passing, receiving, dribbling etc. and pick an exercise where lots of repetition can occur. Coach the players using a variety of teaching styles.



**Small-sided Game 2** - Here is an opportunity for the players to apply what you have just practiced with them. Let them play and try it. Mistakes are allowed!

**Cool Down** - The players have a chance to cool down, stretch and review the key points from practice.

## Role of the Learn to Train Coach

- Provide fun, safe and enjoyable activity.
- Provide well-organized practice and games.
- Provide stimulating activities that promote decision-making and game awareness.
- Communicate appropriately with children.



The U8-U11 female and U9-U12 male age group is the third stage of soccer development that our players go through, commonly known as the “golden age of learning”.

The effect of the role model is very important at this stage. Children begin to identify with famous players and successful teams, and they want to learn imaginative skills. Skill demonstration is very important and the players learn best by “doing”.

Repetitions are important to develop technical excellence, but creating a fun and challenging environment is still essential for stimulating learning.

*Create a fun and challenging environment  
for players to practice and compete in.*

# Four-Corner Approach

The gradual progressive development of players is fundamental to the enjoyment, technical competency and retention in the game. The “four-corner” approach places the player at the center of the development process with soccer experiences that meet the four key needs of the player.



## Learn to Train Coaches' Tips

- Skill demonstration is very important, show them what you want!
- Ensure that you have enough soccer balls for every player.
- This is an important time to work on flexibility.
- Check your playing area, to ensure it's safe. No rocks or holes.
- Develop endurance through playing small-sided games.
- Playing situations work best for teaching understanding and building basic game sense.
- Game formats can progress from 6v6 to 8v8 as the children grow.
- Teach basic principles of play, teach simple combinations.
- During games everyone should play equal time, in all positions.
- No scores or standings are kept.
- 2-3 practice sessions to each game.
- Practice length 45 - 70 minutes.



*Encourage your players to make decisions. Small-sided games create situations where players have a variety of choices to make.*

## Model For Learn to Train Coach



## Learn To Train Game Format

Game	Squad Size	Duration	Ball Size	Field	Goal
6v6	Max 10	2 x 25 min	3/4	36m x 55m	6ft x 14 ft
7v7	Max 12	2 x 25 min	4	36m x 55m	6ft x 16 ft
8v8	Max 14	2 x 30 min	4	42m x 60m	6ft x 16 ft

# Learn to Train Coaching Clinic

For the players to enjoy and benefit from their soccer experience we recommend that each coach attend a Learn To Train Coaching Clinic. During the fun, interactive 14-hour course you will be introduced to games and activities that are designed for the Learn to Train development stage players. Learn how to design and run a safe, age appropriate practice. For more info contact your club, district or OSA.

## Resources

For further information on Coaching clinics, practice sessions, LTPD information, game formats etc. please contact any of the resources listed below.

Ontario Soccer Association - [www.soccer.on.ca](http://www.soccer.on.ca)

Canadian Soccer Association - [www.canadasoccer.com](http://www.canadasoccer.com)

Canadian Sport 4 Life - [www.canadiansportforlife.ca](http://www.canadiansportforlife.ca)

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