



GISA U-10 In House Training Objectives

Coaches should schedule practices 1 hour to an hour and 15 minutes long for this age. This is at the coach's discretion.

Play is 6v6 with goalies

First touch mastering the art of cushioning the ball

Passing with the proper weight different distances 5 to 20 yards with accuracy

Advanced dribbling

Shielding away from pressure

Introduction to team shape

Introduction to stretching the field and providing depth and width

Introduction to proper angles of support

Introduction to throw-ins

Introduction to combination play

Introduction to pressure cover defense and marking closely

Introduction to heading

Improve juggling

Continue to work on moves

Tell me and I will forget

Show me and I will remember

Involve me and I will understand

Encourage all players to provide good support whether attacking or defending. The game is for all players - everyone should be encouraged to participate, particularly the "non-assertive" player(s). Always encourage in practices & games the use of skill, creativity & decision-making. You can now introduce concepts of "team play"; youngsters are now more receptive to playing a "passing game". Do not fill their heads about tactics & formations. KEEP IT SIMPLE! Also never stifle the creative, gifted dribbler. This is the time for players of all abilities to experiment & learn from trial and error. Encourage talking in practices & on the field, let them know this is their game and that they own it. Teach players to use "soccer terms" such as "man on" etc. If you believe that the difference between kicking and passing is thinking, and the difference between drills and activities is thinking, then you should understand the premise that "Soccer Is a Player's Game" and your sessions should give players as many opportunities to play, think & communicate as much as possible!

The GISA In House U-10 system of play is a 1 2 2 1. This system deploys a goalkeeper, two defenders, two midfielders and a single forward. Tactical considerations at U9 and U10 are secondary to technical development and the idea here is to simply provide a framework for organizing the team.

All players should play each of the positions (including goalkeeper) at U9 and U10.

2. Playing time should be equal or nearly equal for all players at this stage of their development.

3. Teach the team to understand the various roles within the system.

Forward: Carry the attack and serve as an outlet player in transition. Also apply defensive pressure to opposing backs. Teach forward to use the midfielder for support. NOTE: In this system, it is useful to teach the forward to try to stay in line with the ball when it is in the defensive third of the field (this provides a long pass outlet for the backs in particular in transition).

Midfielders: Connecting players who supports underneath the forward and work hard on both sides of the ball. In this arrangement, they typically split the field and they should work to be available for one-another whenever the team is in possession. The midfielders should understand the concept of changing fields and also work with the defenders to deal with opponent attacks.

Defenders: One of the most common points of coaching that needs to be emphasized is the need to keep the defenders connected to play as the team moves forward (i.e. the defenders should get to mid-field when the ball is in the team's attacking front third, and not remain in the back third with the goalkeeper). In addition, the defenders should learn early on the concept of covering their partner, which in essence is the idea that the defenders need to be staggered, with one player pressuring the ball and the other player stepping back to "cover" her partner in case the ball gets in behind. Defenders need to learn to be disciplined in this concept and also understand how their roles interchange depending on the situation. In transition, defenders should be taught to look for outlet passes to the forwards and also to the midfielder.

Goalkeeper: As this should be a rotating position at U9 and U10, the coach should focus on making sure the entire team understands safe handling and distribution of the ball and the rules of the game (i.e. when and where to pick up the ball).

Common points of concern:

The most common issue is the tendency of young players to bunch up. This is endemic to the age groups, undeveloped sense of tactical understanding and enthusiasm of the age. Coaches need to be patient and persistent in encouraging players to develop a sense of tactical spacing. Many coaches use zone games, where players are confined to certain parts of the field, to enforce such spacing, and such restrictions have some value but should be applied only for a few minutes at a time in training, as the overriding concern here is the need to enhance players' enjoyment of the game and boxing them off in grids is not supportive of this priority. A more useful and less limiting tactic is to employ "freeze" calls in the course of playing to show players a picture of the bunching occurring on the field. Then quickly move players to better spacing and restart play. Either way, this is one issue all coaches of young players encounter and patience is the key.

In this system, the single forward may not produce enough attacking. The coach should encourage both midfielders to push hard to get forward (attack with three players, not one).

The defenders need to get forward to midfield. U9 and U10 teams often struggle because the backs stay deep in their own end of the field when the ball is in the attacking third. This is a critical point for the coach to address: All players participate in the attack and also in defense. The backs should get to the mid-line and be willing to step up and defend a bit, staying connected to the play at all times. This adjustment will both increase the team's ability to win the ball in the attacking half (and sustain attacks), and also substantially increase the sense of importance (and fun) for playing defense in young players.