



**BOLTON SOCCER CLUB COACHING FUNDAMENTALS**

**BSI TOP TEN FUNDAMENTALS:**

1. Be conscious of the fact that you are first and foremost coaching kids. **Therefore;**
2. Always focus on creating a safe environment to practice and play.
3. Focus on trying to create a fun environment for coaches, players and parents. Players all have different reasons for playing, but they all share a singular goal of having fun. If they don't enjoy it, they won't come back and if you don't have some fun you probably won't come back either.
4. Players all develop at different rates. Each age level will vary in physical development, skill level and maturity ranging anywhere from two to three years of their actual age. Don't expect them all to be the same and don't try and force them to be the same.
5. The average 10-12 year old has a 6-8 minute attention span. When doing something they really like it can be extended. So keep an eye out for the breaking point and switch drills.
6. Communicate what you will coach, explain the purpose, demonstrate and let them execute.
7. Youth players learn best through progressive steps. You should always focus the start of each drill on an easy format that leads to immediate success. Then make the drill progressively harder as you move forward. For example, they are learning to carry a ball: start with no opposition, then increase the pace, then add a defender with limited pressure, add a goal to shoot at, and then add unrestricted pressure. Explain the differences as you go.
8. Stress hydration. At water breaks make it mandatory that all players drink – thirsty or not. If they are thirsty they are already starting to dehydrate – best not to even get to that point.
9. Encourage all players to learn all positions. This is an important dynamic.
10. Playing defense (not allowing goals) is as important as scoring goals. Remember, if the other team doesn't score, you can't lose. Also remember that everyone is always a defender regardless of where you play on the field.

**As you proceed with practices games and the season, keep in mind the four key attributes that make up a youth soccer player:**

- **Technique** – This is defined as the varying methodologies used in a single players performance to execute soccer's individual components; such as, carrying a ball, receiving a ball, shooting, passing, etc.
- **Tactics** – This is defined as the different methods used to leverage techniques in exploiting the oppositions weaknesses or to enhance your team's strengths. For instance, utilizing the extra space on the side of the field by going wide, effectively utilizing "runs" or "through balls".
- **Physical** – athleticism, flexibility, endurance, strength, power, etc.
- **Psychological** – perceptual capabilities (field vision), attention span, decision-making, game intelligence, motivation, concentration, teamwork, leadership, etc.