



Academy u8/u9/u10 Parent Document

What is our Academy?

Midstate academy is for 9U & 10U players who may be interested in playing soccer seriously in later years. It is an advanced level of curriculum & commitment than that of our MYSL program. The academy is part of our club pyramid to moving onto club teams at 11u+ and onwards.

Academy U9 & U10 rules for games (not u8)

- **When goalie has the ball or there is a goal kick, the opposing team retreats to half. Why?** To promote playing from the back in an attractive manner to develop touch, rather than booting the ball to the fastest player.
- **Adding a player when one team goes up by 5 goals. Why?** To help with lopsided games so all players develop & have fun.
- **Offside Rule.** Obvious offside will be called but tighter calls may not. Offside is arguably the most complicated rule in soccer but to simplify it is introduced to get players to avoid goaltending/hanging out by the goal.
- **Throw ins.** If player does not throw the ball in correctly, most referees will allow said player another attempt & even help them how to do it. If they fail again, the throw will typically be awarded to the opposing team. We teach the kids to remember 3 things when throwing the ball in. 1- ball all the way behind the head. 2- Keep both feet on the ground behind or on the line. 3- Try not to twist the body.

FAQ's

- **Why persuade the players to take risks?** Although booting the ball away from our goal may seem like the right thing to do, we are promoting that the kids take a touch & dribble (or pass) out of trouble. We are promoting thinkers & creativity as well as individual technique.
- **Why try moves & risk losing the ball?** We want to develop creative players who are comfortable with the ball. Moves are a fun way for kids to get familiar with the ball.
- **Why encourage the dribble over the pass?** Dribbling allows for more touches & therefore the comfort level with the ball is developed more quickly.
- **Why rotate the players positions?** We are striving for long term goals & therefore want to develop ALL players in all positions (including goalie). This makes for an inclusive environment
- **Why aren't we passing? The best teams in the world pass the ball (Barcelona for example).** We want our teams to be great passing teams & our older teams at u12 & older do focus on that

& are great passing teams. The reason they are is not because they have been practicing passing for years but because all players have developed a familiarity with the ball so they can control it & are able to pass it quickly. The passing skill is more basic & is learned as the players get older. Without control, players cannot pass.

- **Why is coach sitting down to coach?** Soccer is a players' game, & one of the most creative sports there is. Coaches cannot call the plays & control the play as they can in other sports. Research has shown that coaches yell less & get less emotionally involved by sitting down. This allows them time to think & analyze & allow the players to learn & play. Coach should take notes on the game while sitting & guiding the players. Game day is the chance for players to show what they can do, not an opportunity for coaches to give them all the answers to what they have been teaching.
- **What score is coach noting down & why not the actual score?** The actual scores do not matter. This is a short term result. Coach is noting down points for things the players are doing well, keeping them focused on this score more so than the overall score of the game. This helps keep players focused whether winning or losing. We encourage parents to help the players realize that scores do not matter at this age & are out with their control somewhat. We want the kids to WANT to win, but there is absolutely no place for 'win at all costs' attitudes in youth development.
- **Why is coach asking questions to players & not just telling them what to do?** Again, we do not want to give all the answers, rather guide them to think for themselves.
- **Why does coach praise effort so much?** Effort can be controlled. Skills & ability at times cannot. If we only praise for ability players may/will feel more pressured to perform than try hard.
- **Why diagonals?** Angles are key in soccer. Typically, triangles & diagonal plays are safer & allow for attractive soccer. Straight is usually met with traffic.
- **Why is coach not teaching shape/positions/spacing?** These things are & will be taught but in a subtle way. If we were to spend whole training sessions on shape, players would rarely be touching the ball & boredom would set in. This would be detrimental to both the individual skills they should be learning as well as giving players an opportunity to quit the team because it's not fun anymore (the biggest reason kids quit playing sports).
- **Why do two teams train together?** Individual development takes precedence over team development. Players may swap teams now & depending on what may be best for their development, so the pool method is used to help this. Splitting our kids by ability at this age would be pro-team development & against individual development. It would also be unfair as the players are all growing & maturing at different rates. Over time it is typical that many of the so called 'weaker' players develop into the some of the better players in the future given the same opportunities & equality.
- **Why have the kids juggle at the start of every practice?** Although very rare to juggle in a game, juggling provides players with an opportunity to work on eye-foot coordination, control of first touch, & in an indirect way, also shooting (technique used to juggle is very similar to good shooting technique).
- **In training, why do we play to small goals & not the big goals all the time?** Small sided games offer more repetitions to touch the ball for individual technical development. It also allows for more, less-complicated decision making (tactical development), as well as keeping players involved more with attacking AND defending, whilst also providing more opportunities to score goals!

- **Why use iSoccer?** iSoccer is an extension of what we can provide at training sessions. Players who practice on their own with a ball at a young age will develop quicker. iSoccer provides the mix of technology, motivation & fun that many kids enjoy in order to get better.
- **Why do Silent Sidelines?** Midstate & our league (CIYSL) believes that this educational initiative will help ALL of us involved in youth soccer, players, coaches, referees & parents/spectators alike. Many youth soccer organizations discourage sideline instructions from spectators & coaches as it stifles the development of children in their decision making & creativity. The CIYSL believes we can create a better environment for everyone to learn from with this event.
- **What can I/ should I say from the sidelines? See below**
- **What should I say after games? See below**

DURING GAMES

Don't say

Pass it!
 Shoot!
 Clear it!
 Be aggressive!
 Go Go Go!
 Not in the middle!
 Bad body language- hands on head etc

Do say

What do you see?
 Scan
 Relax
 What can you try?
 How can you help?
 Thumbs up

AFTER GAMES

Don't say

Did you win?
 You played terrible
 Why did you do that?
 You're so talented
 False praise
 You were so much better than x
 It doesn't matter

Do Say

Did you have fun?
 How did you play?
 What did you learn?
 What would you differently next time?
 Did you try your hardest?
 I'm proud of you
 I love you

“We all have an in built, natural learning capability that is actually disrupted by instruction”

Sir John Whitmore- Sports Psychologist & Performance Coach