

Drills versus Activities

US Youth Soccer
Coaching Education Department



Principles of Youth Coaching

- ✎ Developmentally Appropriate
- ✎ Clear, Concise, Correct Information
- ✎ Simple to Complex
- ✎ Safe & Appropriate Training Area
- ✎ Decision Making
- ✎ Implications for the Game



DRILLS vs. ACTIVITIES

DRILLS

- Age Inappropriate
- No Thought
- Regimented
- Lines
- Static
- Boring

ACTIVITIES

- Age Appropriate
- Decision Making
- Less Regimented
- Free Movement
- Dynamic
- Fun



The first picture is a typical line drill. What do we see?



- One player actively participating
- Players who are bored
- Players having difficulty focusing
- Players fooling around

Drills:

- Have little repetition unless done for an extended period of time.
- Tend to focus on 1 or 2 techniques in an artificial soccer situation that often does not translate into the game.



The ball to player ratio is improved, but...



The second set of pictures show an allowance for more repetition and participation, but still focus on 1 or 2 techniques in an artificial soccer situation.



NOT FUN!

DRILLS vs. ACTIVITIES

DRILLS

- Static



ACTIVITIES

- Dynamic



DRILLS vs. ACTIVITIES

DRILLS

- Regimented



ACTIVITIES

- Organized Chaos



While the kids are still in lines waiting their turn to play, the small group numbers are an improvement.



“Games and activities you actually play and drills you stand in line.”

Alan Wardeiner age 10

“I don’t know.”

Andrea Wardeiner age 7



DRILLS vs. ACTIVITIES

DRILLS

- Lines



ACTIVITIES

- Free Movement



DRILLS vs. ACTIVITIES

DRILLS

- Boring



ACTIVITIES

- Fun





What do we see in the third set of pictures?

The third set of pictures shows an allowance for more repetition and participation, but still focus on 1 or 2 techniques in an artificial soccer situation.

NOT FUN!

This drill could have an element of competition, fun, and begin to look like an activity if the coach has each team compete for how many goals are scored in a specific period of time.



DRILLS vs. ACTIVITIES

DRILLS

- No Thought



ACTIVITIES

- Decision Making



Activity = players are engaged physically & mentally!



The fourth set of pictures has players playing an activity with big goals. What do we see?



- ❖ All players actively participating
 - ❖ The large goals encourage repetition of shooting while placing the players in a realistic situation.
 - ❖ Players are able to solve soccer problems:
 - ❖ When to shoot
 - ❖ Which foot to shoot with
 - ❖ Which part of the foot to use
 - ❖ Getting open for a shot
 - ❖ Getting the body in position for a shot
- and many more.....

PLAYERS HAVING FUN!



DRILLS vs. ACTIVITIES

DRILLS

- Age Inappropriate



ACTIVITIES

- Age Appropriate



**US YOUTH
SOCCER**

What are the differences between drills and game-like activities?

“Drills are boring. Activities keep me fresh. They keep my love for soccer.”

Alan Wardeiner

“Drills are boring and crowded. Activities are fun, crazy and exciting.”

Andrea Wardeiner



Characteristics of Well-Selected Games

- ✿ Opportunities to experiment and experience are abundant and continuous; children have lots of safe turns.
- ✿ Effort has been made to reduce the potential for emotional and social, as well as, physical injury.



Characteristics of Well-Selected Games

- ✿ A broad range of differences can be accommodated. Progressive challenges can be built in to allow individuals to participate at their own personal level.
- ✿ Goals and purposes are clear, consistent, and attainable.



Characteristics of Well-Selected Games

- ✿ Feedback is usually immediate and frequent, allowing a participant to experience relationships between cause and effect.
- ✿ Errors are expected and forgiven.



Characteristics of Well-Selected Games



✎ There is usually an almost instant opportunity to try again (to adjust, to repeat, to recover).

✎ Perseverance and coping with temporary frustration is encouraged by the format of the game.



Characteristics of Well-Selected Games

- ✎ Self-control frequently contributes to achieving the goal.
- ✎ All of the components of the game tend to enhance the possibility of positive social interactions.



Characteristics of Well-Selected Games

 No player is eliminated either blatantly or subtly.



Coaching Activities Checklist

- ✿ Are there implications for the game?
- ✿ Is the Coach's feedback appropriate?
- ✿ Are the players involved in the activities?
- ✿ Is creativity and decision making being used?
- ✿ Are the spaces used appropriate?
- ✿ Are the activities organized?
- ✿ Are the activities fun?



TIONS of Effective Coaching

- ✎ Preparation
- ✎ Organization
- ✎ Explanation
- ✎ Demonstration
- ✎ Participation/Execution
- ✎ Correction
- ✎ Evaluation
- ✎ Reflection



Sources:

Dr. David Carr

Alan Wardeiner

Andrea Wardeiner

Dr. Marianne Torbert

“A Game is the Best Teacher,” written
by Mark Wardeiner and edited by Dr.
Tom Turner



OKAY, KIDS, SINCE WE'RE
PLAYING 3-V-3 THIS YEAR, I'M
GOING TO BREAK YOU INTO
GROUPS OF THREE FOR PRACTICE.

COACH
DEENA!
COACH
DEENA!

YES, TONY?

I HAVEN'T LEARNED
MY THREES YET!

DO WE GET
TO PICK WHICH
THREE WE'RE
IN?

Andy

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