

9. Competitive Program

9.1. Training Philosophy

Player development is the most important priority in the Texas Heatwave Soccer Club Training Program, particularly in the U9 through U14 age groups. A well planned Player Development Program lays the foundation for Team Performance.

For younger players, the Texas Heatwave Soccer Club Training Program attempts to develop player confidence and composure while under pressure, but with firm underpinning of the technical aspects of ball control and ball manipulation.

For older players, training exposes them to a series of “conditioned” games designed to develop their tactical understanding and awareness of group and team play.

Ultimately, the aim of the Texas Heatwave Soccer Club Training Program is to inculcate the instinctive, natural soccer learning environments found in Europe and South America.

9.2. The Academy Program 6 – 10 Year Olds

The goal of the Academy Program is the following:

1. Ability of each player to strike a ball, over distance, with accuracy with both feet.
2. To “cut” the ball with inside and outside of both feet.
3. To protect (screen) the ball away from an opponent, while on the move, with either foot
4. Turning with the ball with either foot and changing direction
5. To mark opponents goal-side and (mostly) on the inside line
6. To control the ball with either foot and changing direction
7. To head the ball with accuracy over 10-15 yards.
8. To beat an opponent 1v1 with a series of dribbling moves using fakes and with changes of speed and direction. i.e. step-overs, Cruyff turn, Matthews, Scissors
9. Basic understanding of team play in 2v2, 3v3, and 4v4 situations

The Academy Program offers one hour or two hours of instruction per week over a 10 week period. On occasions, Academy teams will play in tournaments and friendly games against the other Houston clubs. The overall principle of the Academy Program is learning fundamentals through FUN. For more information, contact the Texas Heatwave Soccer office at 281-359-7280 or go to the website www.txheatwave.com.

9.3. Select Program Training Curriculum

1. U10-U12 Individual player development, small group tactics and introduction of 8v8 soccer
 - a. Enhanced development of the Academy Program
 - b. Development of individual player technique
 - c. Basic understanding of team defending with man marking and a free player
 - d. Basic understanding of combination play. I.e.e. 1-2's, take-overs
 - e. The importance of possession
 - f. Introduction of conditioned games
2. U13-U14 Enhanced development of individual player development, small group tactics and introduction of 11 a side soccer
 - a. Enhanced development of individual player technique under pressure
 - b. Enhanced development of combination play. i.e. overlaps, third man running
 - c. Introduction of different systems of play
 - d. Enhanced development of conditioned games
3. U15-U18 Development of large group tactics/strategies
 - a. Defensive roles and responsibilities
 - i. What is our mode of defense?
 - ii. Where do we decide to defend
 - iii. The development of "forcing play" into our defensive strategies
 - iv. Marking and Covering
 - v. Delay in defense/pressure on the ball
 - b. Offensive roles and responsibilities
 - i. Do we play with 1, 2, 3, or 4 forwards?
 - ii. Do the midfield players pass the ball on the ground or in the air, to the feet of the forwards, or aim passes to the spaces behind the opposing defense?
 - iii. How do we exploit miss-matches between our offense and the opposing defense?
 - iv. Use of set plays
 - c. Enhanced development of conditioned games

The key to the progress of team development is identifying key issues to a teams performance. Whether there is a defensive or offensive deficiency, the Texas Heatwave Training Staff will structure a training session to rectify the deficiency. Most of the time, this will involve the use of conditioned games. The Director of Training will oversee every team's training needs.

4. Conditioned Games

All the research work at major universities throughout the world concerned with motor skill learning indicates that the greater the degree of similarity between a practice situation and a game situation, then the greater the amount of transfer of

learning between the practice and game situations. Let's look at this more closely. What are the "ingredients" of a soccer game? There are many. The following are some of these

- a. A ball
- b. Teammates
- c. Opponents
- d. A defined playing area
- e. A direction
- f. A target or goal
- g. Rules of play
- h. Decision making

If any of the above "ingredients" are missing, then there will be less transfer of learning from the practice situation to the game situation. If, for example, there are no opponents or teammates in the practice drill, or no decision making is required, then there is hardly any transfer of learning from the practice drill to the soccer game.

It is a well known fact in soccer coaching circles that the most effective way of teaching players to play the game of soccer is through "conditioned games." A phase of play in a typical game situation is identified, and this is practiced (repeated) over and over again with the players being "encouraged" by their trainer to make certain responses. The trainer places a certain "condition" on the player designed to effect the necessary improvement. For example, to make sure a team moves up the field together as a unit, all players, except the goal keeper, must be in the opponents half of the field to score a goal. Failure to do so results in the goal being disallowed. There are literally hundreds of different "conditions" that can be placed on players involved in conditioned games. The secret of successful training is to design a conditioned game that is exactly appropriate for the age and skill level of the players involved. Very little transfer of learning takes place when players are involved in unopposed drills. At least two of the above ingredients, opponents and decision making, will be absent from the practice drill. Simply put, you do not learn to play soccer by performing ball juggling skills, dribbling around cones, or standing in lines waiting for your turn.

9.4. Coaching Education Program

The Texas Heatwave Soccer Club provides ongoing coaching education for its trainers and team managers/coaches. The club and associations conduct regular D and E coaching modules for its team managers/coaches under the instruction of STYSA qualified coaches. In addition, the full time training staff regularly attends National Coaching Schools/Symposiums held by the United States Soccer Federation. For more information, contact the Texas Heatwave Soccer office at 281-359-7280 or go to the website www.txheatwave.com.

9.5. Player Evaluations

Every select player receives a written evaluation in December and the following May just before try-outs. See next page for Player Evaluation Forms.

Player Evaluation

Player's Name: _____ Age Group: _____

U.S. Soccer uses four criteria to evaluate and train players. The Texas Heat offers this evaluation so that each player will know what we see as important and what areas they need to work on.

	Excellent	Average	Needs Improvement
Technical Dimension			
1 st Touch			
1v1 Dribbling			
Heading			
Passing			
Shooting			
Tactical Dimension			
Ability to Read and Anticipate Flow of Game			
Ability to maintain Game's Speed of Play			
Makes Good Decisions of when to Pass, Dribble, or Shoot			
Physical Dimension			
Physical Speed			
Physical Strength			
Physical Fitness			
Psychological Dimension			
Training Attitude			
Shows perseverance to improve as a player			
"Coachability" responses positively instruction			
Competitive Attitude			
Attendance at Training			

Comments:

Trainer's Name: _____ Date: _____

GoalKeeper Evaluation

Player's Name: _____ Age Group: _____

	Very Good	Good	Average	Fair	Poor
Agility					
Crosses					
Courage					
High Shots					
Low Shots					
1 v 1					
Kicking					
Distribution					
Mental Fitness					
Physical Fitness					
Positional Play					
Practice Attendance					
Game Attendance					
Communication					
Overall					

Comments:

Trainer's Name: _____ Date: _____