

COACH YOURSELF SOCCER



A guide for Soccer kids who can think for themselves

INTRODUCTION

All kids have natural talent. It's what they do with it that counts.

There are thousands of talented Soccer kids who only train when they're told to train and there are thousands of Freestyle Soccer kids who train when not told to train. Freestyle kids look for more ways, better ways, faster ways, smarter ways and different ways to improve.

These kids always have a ball at their feet whether they juggle at home or kick around with mates. We need to discover these kids who practice what they can't do, not just what they can do.

You need a lot more than talent to achieve your full potential as a Soccer kid. You need inspiration, innovation, motivation, confidence and intelligence and a lot of other personal qualities. If you're serious about reaching the top in Soccer, you can be your own personal trainer, individual coach, fitness trainer, running coach, tactician and statistician. You are the only one who can decide how hard you try.



PERSONAL TRAINER

The aim of a training plan is to identify short term achievable goals.

You need a personal trainer to plan your training program. That's you. Nobody can maintain peak output throughout the year. All training plans are based on performance as well as recovery. Make a list of all the physical and technical elements you need to become a top player.

You will need to include exercises (flexibility, agility, strength, speed, endurance, recovery), basic ball skills (dribbling, juggling, shooting, heading, passing,) and knowledge (games, T.V., books, courses).

The off season is the ideal time to practice close repetition ball drills while the weather favours relaxed control. January is the best time to start a fitness program that gradually reaches a high level during pre-season while the lazier players are still struggling with initial fitness. Shooting practice is essential during the season so you remain sharp.



INDIVIDUAL SKILLS COACH

Teaching yourself is one of the most effective ways of learning.

Intuitive ball control requires thousands of repetitive ball touches. A team coach doesn't have time to provide that type of training for all players. You need an individual skills coach to teach you how to control the ball in a wide variety of situations. That means you.

Too many kids try too much too soon and try too hard to kick a ball too hard. Always start with short, slow, simple, relaxed, two touch control on the ground so that you develop a feel for the ball. You can slowly increase the speed, distance, power, intensity and complexity until you're able to perform effective skills at a competitive level.

The key to the future of Australian Soccer is a kid and a ball. You don't need a team coach to trap, pass, dribble, juggle, head, balance, create tricks or shoot. You just need to use your own intelligence, initiative, innovation, intuition and inspiration. Wall practice helps.



FITNESS TRAINER

If you're serious, you'll push yourself harder than anyone else can.

Soccer combines so many physical skills. You'll need a fitness coach to develop your flexibility, agility, strength, power, stamina and recovery. That's you. Endurance is a low intensity activity for a long duration. Speed is a high intensity activity for a short duration. Soccer is a high intensity activity for a long duration. There are so many simple ways you can develop a physical advantage during match play.

Given enough time, the human body can adapt to a lot of stress. If you do 10 pushups/situps/abdominals on the first training day, and add one each day, you can reach 100 in 3 months quite easily. Start your own personal exercise program and keep a record of your progress. Too many kids separate fitness from ballwork. Try to combine both. Learn to integrate your natural skills with your Soccer skills.



RUNNING COACH

Go as far as you can and from there you can see a lot further.

At some stage, the top athletes in all sports run on their own to clear the mind and prepare the body for competition. You need an athletics coach to drive you as far and as fast as you can go. That's your job.

A running program is very simple to organise and maintain. Start with short jogs and gradually increase the distance till you feel comfortable without breathing heavily. Once you establish an endurance base, you can decrease the distance of your runs while increasing the speed.

Combine short shuttle runs with pushups and situps so that you use the exercises to recover from the sprints and the sprints to recover from the exercises. You can develop running capability by changing the frequency, intensity and time (F.I.T.) of your runs. The more you push yourself in each game, the easier it becomes in the next game.



TACTICIAN

You can't improve until you learn what you need to improve.

Intelligent players are constantly learning more about the game. You need a tactician to teach you the principles of the game. You can do that. It's too easy to stand around and wait for the coach to tell you what to do and how to think. The aim of Freestyle Soccer is to give you the freedom to think for yourself, the confidence to create your own moves and encouragement to believe in yourself and your talent.

If you play chess you can develop a basic understanding of attack and defence and an awareness of space and possession. Observe coaches and players, good and bad, listen to what they say and remember what they do. Learn what kids do off the ball and look for any players who are different and unpredictable. Watch as many games as you can and listen to what the coaches say after games especially when they lose.



STATISTICIAN

The most important subject you can learn about in soccer is yourself

The primary goal of any kid or teenager is confidence and that comes from clear facts not sports psychology. You need a statistician who can keep a record of your performance and improvement. Do it yourself. When you see your improvement written in black and white, you can't help becoming more confident and inspired to train harder.

Keep a one year diary of your training results starting with your pre-season fitness program in January. If you juggle every week, you will notice that your numbers increase and your ball skills improve. You can measure accuracy and power using marker cones as small targets. Keep a record of all your training sessions, your runs and your games and write down key elements such as short term injuries so you can assess the effects these have on your body. You control your future.

