

# THE BEST OF FREESTYLE SOCCER



*Self sufficient kids make the best of their abilities*

**STRENGTH OF CHARACTER**

Kids lose the joy of discovery, the challenge of competition and the sense of achievement when adults direct their every move, correct their every mistake and protect them from every loss and failure.

Freestyle kids want to challenge themselves and compete with their mates. They expect to lose because they practice difficult skills, not the easy skills, and they expect to overcome adversity because they never give up. They develop initiative, self awareness and resilience.

Freestyle Soccer is not about fitness, skill or talent. It's about strength of character and the personal qualities that never get identified at grading. The aim of Freestyle Soccer is to give kids the freedom to think for themselves, and the confidence to create their own moves, so they can make mistakes, learn from them and meet the next challenge.

Kids can take responsibility for their own development, set their own achievable short term goals and keep a record of their improvement. Adults can help by stimulating intelligence, encouraging creativity, inspiring confidence and believing in the natural talent that kids have.



***THE SELF CONTROL***

## FOOTWORK

*Freestyle kids make Soccer fun and they make Soccer work.*

Elite Freestyle Soccer kids research basic skills and develop more ways, better ways, faster ways, smarter ways, sharper ways and different ways to improve them. In simple steps, they use close repetition training drills to increase the speed, pressure and intensity.

Footwork and vision are essential to all Soccer skills. Kids can't strike a ball if they don't know how to move their feet and they can't strike a target if they don't know what to look at when they kick the ball.

The keys to footwork are timing, balance and coordination. Elite Freestyle kids need to be equally good with both feet. The most effective way to develop footwork is to juggle a Soccer ball and the secret to juggling is as simple as walking and running. Kids just need to alternate their feet so that they maintain their balance all the time.



## THE *SELF DISCIPLINE*



## VISION

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

Soccer coaches don't know what to look at when kids kick a ball so they don't know that kids don't know what to look at when they kick. Half the kids think that they look at the ball when they strike it and the other half think they should look at the target. In fact, the many kids who don't check the target before they pass or shoot will take their eyes off the ball as they kick it. A signal from the brain makes them look up at the target and there's not much they can do to stop it.

Soccer is like a chess game. Elite Freestyle kids develop a high level of vision. They constantly scan the game to monitor both teams and both sides of the field. They watch the ball and everything else. Most people follow the bouncing ball and overlook the rest of the game.



## SELF AWARENESS

## POWER

*The secret to power is to relax when the pressure is on*

Most kids try too hard to kick the ball too hard. Force is the default option when kids lack skill. They tense up, rush their moves, and blast the ball over the crossbar instead of into the net. Elite Freestyle kids develop their timing first and then gradually increase the velocity of their kicks. Power shooting begins in the 6 yard box so that kids can develop eye/foot coordination and a feel for the ball.

When freestyle kids shoot at goal they combine power and precision with speed and movement. They practice again and again until they become sharp and can hit a small target consistently.



## SELF DRIVE



## PRECISION

### *Elite Freestyle Soccer kids train together for a common purpose*

Any kid can kick a ball. Freestyle kids can control a ball. The difference with Elite Freestyle kids is that they know where the ball is going because they put the ball where they want it to go.

Any kid can hit a small target. A 5 year old can hit a target 10 metres away and a 10 year old can hit a target 20 metres away. Elite Freestyle kids identify their range of accuracy and then extend it through intensive range practice. They find their range, extend the distance and then add the power to combine it with their precision.

Any kid can run straight forward and kick straight forward. Elite Freestyle kids learn to shoot on the move, across the goal, at any speed angle or distance until sharpshooting becomes second nature.



## SELF ASSURANCE

## MOVEMENT

### *Kids can't develop if they're not free to play their natural game*

When players stand in line waiting to kick a dead ball to the coach, it becomes obvious how many talented kids pass the ball and then stand back to admire their kick. Juggling in Pairs teaches kids to 'give and go'. There is no time out in this drill. Kids are either controlling the ball or supporting the ball player. As they evolve, they increase the pressure and intensity by not letting the ball hit the ground.

In developing groups of kids, we should never aim for the weakest link. We should always aim for the strongest link and give the rest of the kids a level they can measure themselves against. There's no such thing as a perfect system. When we believe we're perfect, that's when we stop trying. The aim of Freestyle Soccer is to keep improving.



## SELF MOTIVATION



## DECISION

*How good you are depends on how bad you want it.*

Ordinary kids learn **what** to do and **how**. Freestyle kids understand **why** they do it. Elite Freestyle kids decide **when** and **where** to do it.

There's no 'Time Out' in Soccer. When the ball is out of play, ordinary players look for a rest. Freestyle kids look for an option. They never stop playing. They look and think 360 degrees and they constantly create or close down space to improve team possession.

The Elite Freestyle player never stops moving in a game so he's always a bit fitter for the next game. We all have a choice. We can always take the soft option or the hard way out. The strength of character in Freestyle kids shows that they can make the hard choices.



## SELF CONFIDENCE



## BELIEF

*The keys to elite play are self awareness and innovation*

From the smallest kid to the biggest organisation, the four major obstacles to achievement are ignorance, laziness, selfishness and fear. Fear of failure dominates all levels of sport so that a lot of coaches and players are scared to take responsibility for their own efforts. They constantly look for an excuse or someone else to blame.

Elite Freestyle kids are responsible for every game they play. The other team can only play as well as they let them. A loss means that they have to do more next time and they have to do it better. Freestyle kids overcome the four major obstacles by developing intelligence, motivation, teamwork and confidence. They learn from good and bad.



## SELF RESPECT

## REPETITION

*Kids never feel any pressure from a Soccer ball.*

All kids have natural skills. They all have eyes, ears, mouths, minds and bodies and they just need to use them. Freestyle Soccer doesn't teach skills. It activates the natural skills that kids have always had. With footwork, vision and communication, Soccer skills suddenly become a lot easier.

Freestyle kids don't need a coach to develop their natural skills. They need a Soccer ball and thousands of touches using close repetition drills. The key is to keep a record of their performance and improvement so that their confidence is based on accurate results. Elite Freestyle kids raise the bar by practising in pairs without letting the ball bounce and by challenging themselves with speed juggling.



## SELF IMPROVEMENT



## CHALLENGE

*Kids aren't ready to push themselves till we stop pushing them.*

All kids look similar until we put the pressure on. In mud and sleet, the Freestyle kid will retain a high level of control while the ordinary kid will lose the ball. All kids are different but they can all improve.

Drive has to come from the kids. If the parents or coaches are more motivated than the player, that kid will give up within two years. Elite Freestyle kids don't need to be motivated. These are the kids who practice their skills every day without being told. They don't get noticed because they don't make a fuss about their input.

An untalented kid who pushes himself will go a lot further than the talented kid who hates being pushed. But we lose both of them because natural talent is meant to be encouraged not suffocated.



## SELF DETERMINATION

## INTUITION

*Innovation just isn't the same any more. We didn't see that coming.*

Messi and Ronaldo aren't necessarily the fastest, strongest or most accurate players. They use a combination of different skills. They're different and that's what makes them unpredictable. Elite Freestyle kids combine key elements to develop their unique style. They can combine footwork with vision, power with precision, movement with decision, belief with repetition and challenge with intuition. They integrate their Soccer skills with their natural skills. Intuitive players don't know what they're going to do till they do it. So there's no way the opposition can anticipate or counter their moves. Soccer kids are just like human beings. They have intelligence and talent and they need to exercise them so they can achieve their full potential.



## SELF EXPRESSION