

2020

SOCCER VISION



The future of Australian Soccer is great because there's so much room for improvement and so many ways to improve.

AUSTRALIAN SOCCER

By 2020, Australia will become a Top 20 Football nation.

Australia is a younger player on the international Football scene. Like any younger player, we have all the enthusiasm and ability but what we lack is confidence and belief in our own talent. No country can achieve its full potential believing that the vast majority of children lack the talent to reach the top. We need to inspire and believe in kids.

There are top clubs in England with top managers, and the most expensive players, but they fail to achieve their goals because they just don't connect with each other. Australia has all the elements to become a Top 20 Football nation but we need to connect the game with all players. There are better ways to connect a kid with a ball, different ways to connect coaches with their teams, faster ways to connect strikers with goals and smarter ways to connect a teaching system with a learning program so we can discover natural talent. By 2020, we will connect the different elements and activate them.



LEARNING

Australian Soccer will develop an extensive learning program to identify and develop the natural qualities that all players have.

All kids have talent. We can't learn about talent by teaching skill. Skill comes from the coach. Talent comes from the players. If we want to discover and develop talent we need a learning program.

We're all in the game for different reasons, whether to make money, win games, develop skill, discover talent or have fun. We can achieve all of these if we get our priorities right. If we're driven by business or winning, we can lose sight of the most valuable resource we have.

There's so much we don't know about our own players. We don't know how they move their feet or what they look at when they kick. We don't know how many ball touches they need before a game. We don't know where they move or what they call off the ball. We don't know how accurate kids are because we never teach them what to aim for. By 2020, coaches will understand a lot more about their players.



KIDS

Every Australian Soccer kid will have access to their own personal development program and training diary.

Every kid has external qualities that can be coached like fitness and skill and internal qualities that can't be coached like intelligence, motivation and talent. Grading is an effective exercise to identify the external skills but sometimes it produces skilful kids too selfish to pass the ball or fit players too lazy to run for it. We need to identify those kids with internal qualities so we can add the external qualities.

There are thousands of intelligent, motivated and talented players who are overlooked because a teaching system isn't geared to learn about players or identify their character or personality. We need research and development teams prepared to visit ovals to observe what kids and coaches do for training and match preparation. Every club should conduct an annual skills competition to identify those motivated kids who spend hundreds of hours developing control. By 2020, research and development teams will monitor the effects of all training drills.



SKILL

Every Soccer kid will benefit from an annual skills assessment.

Soccer skills are very simple. Any kid can pass, trap, dribble, head, screen the ball or shoot. The most difficult skill in Soccer is deciding when to choose which one. Kids can only achieve an intuitive level of skill from experience with thousands of repetitive ball touches.

All kids are different. They can all contribute something different to their team. We can teach every kid to be the same so that they all look, think, move, stretch, kick and play the same way or we can learn about kids and discover what makes each one different and valuable.

It's relatively easy to develop talented, intelligent individuals to suit a system but it's a lot more rewarding to develop a system to suit the talents of individual players. By 2020, coaches will develop a Talent Identification system that can also provide feedback for every player.



TALENT

Soccer kids will discover that they can think for themselves.

From the smallest kid to the largest organisation, the only obstacles to achievement are ignorance, laziness, selfishness and fear. They prevent kids from achieving their full potential and prevent countries from discovering and developing their natural resources. Anyone can overcome these obstacles by maximising their intelligence, motivation, responsibility and confidence.

All kids have talent. What's significant is not how easy it is to improve any Soccer kid in 5 minutes just by activating their natural skills and integrating them with their Soccer skills but how difficult it is to convince any adult. Kids are easy to improve because they're willing to listen and learn. They achieve because they believe. Belief creates action and innovation. Lack of belief creates inertia. By 2020, every Soccer coach will understand the importance of footwork and vision and be able to improve any Soccer player in 5 minutes.



TRAINING

Every kid will learn what to do, practice how to do it, understand why they do it and be able to decide when and where to do it.

All kids are different and they all respond differently to training. We can only improve kids if we discover what each kid needs to improve. There are so many ways to measure individual performance and improvement and identify strengths, weaknesses, skills, talents, fears, needs and limits. There's a key to every kid and a drill for every skill.

Every junior squad will have a Buddy system to ensure that no kid ever gets left behind. Every junior team will have a teenage mentor or assistant coach who can observe play off the ball. The teenage mentor is a two way connection. They connect with the coach and assist them with the training drills but they also connect with the kids because they can demonstrate ball skills. Ideally, they are three years older than the kids. The teenage mentor of today is the coach of the future.

By 2020, kids will be able to feed the ball in training drills so they can develop responsibility and discipline under supervision of the coach.



COACHING

Every club will have an Individual Skills Specialist and a Skills Helpline so that kids feel confident to ask for support.

Some sports have an assistant coach, a goalkicking coach, a defence coach, a forwards coach, a statistician or a nutritionist. In the 21st century, Soccer has one team coach doing everything. Coaches don't have time to learn about individuals or watch what players do without the ball. Some kids spend years repeating the same simple mistakes and coaches keep correcting the same simple techniques because nobody can spare five minutes to identify the same underlying cause.

An individual coach, personal trainer, teenage mentor or club skills specialist can improve any Soccer kid in a few minutes by observing mistakes and monitoring footwork and vision, power and precision, movement and decision, belief and repetition, challenge and intuition. The effect on kids is immediate, clear, measurable and permanent. By 2020, kids will integrate their natural skills with their Soccer skills.



RESPONSIBILITY

Adults will have a better understanding of what kids can achieve when they're given more responsibility for their own development.

Confidence comes from facts not compliments. Kids will increase their confidence by measuring ball skills and fitness levels so they can witness their improvement in black and white. They will connect what they get out of the game with what they put into it. All kids will have access to an individual skills training program online so motivated kids can practice skills at home and keep a record of their progress.

There's more to sport than techniques and tactics. Team sports enable kids to develop life skills by setting standards for respect, team spirit, sportsmanship, health, fitness and self discipline. At some time in life, every kid has to discover how to lose, fail and make mistakes without using the weather as an excuse or blaming a referee for bad decisions. By 2020, every Soccer kid will know what their three peak skills are.



INNOVATION

Every kid reaches a level where they start to create their own moves.

Each generation is smarter and more talented than the previous generation. We already know what the older generation can do. We need to learn what the next generation can do. Kids achieve because they don't know what they can't do. Adults give up too easily because they know what they can't do. We need to believe kids can achieve.

The biggest problem with a system is when we believe it's perfect and we stop looking for ways to improve. Kids don't have pre-conceived ideas of what to do so they keep tackling a problem till they succeed. Everything they do is innovation. There are Soccer skills that haven't even been invented yet and the next generation will discover them.

When players do something different, they should never be criticised for being wrong. They're not wrong, they're just being innovative. Imagine a 13 year old Ronaldo being made to think like other players. Kids should never be discouraged from thinking about the game. By 2020, Soccer kids will have more confidence to challenge their limits.



FACILITIES

Every Soccer club will have a shooting gallery and a skills park where motivated kids can practice with their teenage mentors.

Sport is not just a business or a competition. Local councils don't establish skate parks, cricket nets and basketball courts to make money. Surfers don't go to the beach to win competitions. BMX bike riders don't just ride for fun. Kids are a valuable resource investment for the future and some sports appreciate this. Given the opportunity, a lot of kids will develop their natural skills without being coaxed. Kids don't need to play Soccer to have a ball but once they get to kick around they develop a love for the game and a hunger for the skill.

Thousands of Soccer kids are ready to challenge themselves and compete with their mates while learning new skills and swapping new tricks. These kids aren't scared of losing, failing or making mistakes because they know they can learn from them and develop resilience, self awareness and responsibility. By 2020, all Soccer kids will have access to practice nets so they can create their own drills and develop their own skills without being corrected every time they get it wrong.



SOCCKER CULTURE

There's a whole Soccer culture just waiting to be discovered.

There's a lot more to Soccer than teaching techniques and tactics so that teams can win games. When we look at the leading Football nations of the world, we see elite coaching academies. We don't see the millions of Soccer kids who practice their skills every day on the beaches, parks and streets without direction, correction, protection or perfection from coaches. Soccer is not just a sport, it's a culture.

There are thousands of Australian Soccer kids who can be inspired to develop their own Soccer culture. These are the kids who already practice every day kicking against a wall or juggling with their mates. Most clubs have no idea who these kids are because they only look at the kids who train when they're told and do what they're told. They overlook the kids who still want to train even when they're not told.

By 2020, Australia will have a Soccer culture where kids train every day because they want to not because they have to. A national Soccer identity will connect a kid with a ball, a striker with a goal, a coach with a team, natural skills with Soccer skills, individuals with their confidence and the biggest organisation with the smallest player.

