

WE CAN IMPROVE ANY AUSTRALIAN SOCCER KID IN 5 MINUTES

by Jack Kynaston



All kids are different. All kids have talent. All kids make mistakes. All kids can practise. All kids can improve. All kids can think for themselves.

LEARNING PROGRAM

We can teach every Soccer kid to be the same or we can discover what makes them all different.

In a coaching system, we look for the skilful kids who learn to do what they're told because they're easier to coach than the talented kids who learn to think for themselves. The aim of a learning program is to discover and develop the kids who train when they're not told because they look for a challenge. The holistic approach enables us to identify what each individual needs to improve. We can stimulate their intelligence, integrate their character, coordinate their motor skills, motivate their enthusiasm, activate their talent and generate their confidence.

We teach Soccer skills without discovering anything about the natural skills that all players have. Kids need footwork and vision to pass the ball, they need power and precision to score goals, they need movement and decision to keep possession, they need belief and repetition to develop confidence and they need challenge and intuition to achieve their full potential.



Kids who run their own drills develop respect, responsibility, resourcefulness and resilience.

GROWTH

Kids grow because they're willing to look, listen, ask and learn. We can all learn a lot from kids.

Growing kids have a growth mindset that enables them to discover what they don't know, practise what they can't do, question old ideas and challenge new ideas. Grownups develop a fixed mindset that enables them to stick with what they know, ignore what they don't know, practise what they can do, avoid what they can't do, play it safe and find ways to stay the same.

Freestyle Soccer drills are designed to meet the needs of kids. Interactive smart drills identify strengths, weaknesses, skills, talents, fears, needs and limits. Lighten Up can improve any Soccer kid in 5 minutes just by activating their natural ability.



If we keep teaching the same old drills, kids will discover a whole new ball game on Youtube.

Close repetition drills enable kids to work closely in pairs while getting hundreds of ball touches. Fusion drills teach kids to look, think, move, control, mind, body and ball. Rapid fire drills show kids how to shoot. Power drills teach them how to hit the net. A skills park challenges confident kids to run their own training drills. A shooting gallery unlocks the secrets of scoring goals.

FOOTWORK

Juggling a Soccer ball is as simple as walking.

The secret is to alternate feet with every step.

All Soccer kids are flat footed because we teach them to stand flat footed so we can isolate and demonstrate the perfect kick at training. In an open learning program, kids improve footwork in 5 minutes because they open their eyes, ears, mouths and minds so they can look, listen, ask questions and think for themselves.

Some kids spend years repeating the same simple mistakes and coaches spend years correcting the same simple skills because nobody analyses the mistakes to discover their underlying cause. Soccer kids play the way they train. If we teach kids to kick the ball while they stand still at training, they're learning to stand still while they kick the ball in a game. When a whole squad stands around sharing one ball before kickoff, it's natural that they want to stand around waiting for the ball after kickoff. Some kids learn to stay the same and other kids learn to grow.



Little kids can learn to take 100 steps, make 100 decisions and get 100 ball touches in 5 minutes

VISION

The more we learn about our game, the more we discover how little we know about our players.

Most kids don't know what to look at when they shoot. They've never thought about it and no coach has ever told them. Some look at the ball, some look at the goal, some look at the goal before they shoot and some look up after they shoot. Experts see what they're trained to see. They look at technique and look for mistakes. We see what we think we see. We see kids who stand still and do what they're told and we think that they're learning.

Most kids focus on what they can get out of their game so they look up at the goal when they shoot. Freestyle kids focus on what they put into their game so they look at the ball when they shoot. Vision is the reason why so many shots go over the bar or straight to the keeper. Coaches look at the kick and overlook the kid. Scoring goals is as simple as **Ready** (control the ball), **Aim** (pick a small target) and **Fire** (keep eyes firmly on the ball).



When we copy each other, coaches never discover that 50% of kids look at the goal when they shoot.

POWER

If we can raise the bar, we can score more goals.

Most kids don't know their own strength. Soccer kids try too hard to kick the ball too hard. They expect too much too soon, tense up and rush. Boys, especially, develop the ability to blast the ball over the crossbar from inside the 6 yard box because Dad keeps shouting 'big kick, big kick'. Freestyle Soccer kids learn to develop their timing first and then add power and speed. They know that slow becomes smooth and smooth becomes fast.

Kids need to read the speed of the feed. When a low hard cross comes in, too many kids try to stop it first and then kick a dead ball. Smart kids can use the energy in a ball to deflect it into the net. Freestyle kids control their power, temperament and game.

Kids who lack confidence will kick the ball too far or juggle too high to compensate. Force is the default option for lack of skill. Real power comes from training. Force comes from straining. 5 minutes of wall practice teaches kids how to weight their kick. The power of one on one is the secret to intuitive ball control. If you want to discover how talented kids are, throw a ball to them.



Lighten Up was created by a 15 year old in 1985.

PRECISION

***Nobody knows that all kids aim big and miss big.
Most strikers have no idea what they're missing.***

The most important subject in Soccer is not winning or making money. It's the player. The most important subject any kid can learn about is themselves. Kids need to measure their range of accuracy and power so they know their own limits. If we learn about players, we discover that any kid can hit a small target 30 metres away. Specialist marksmen don't aim for the target. They aim for the bullseye which is the smallest part of the target.

Some kids learn how to pass and some kids learn how to fail. Coaches have no idea how accurate kids really are because there are no small targets in Soccer. Most kids just do what they're told. We tell players to shoot at goal so they aim for the whole target. Freestyle kids pick a spot where they can beat the keeper. Coaches who don't know how to score goals will only spend 15 minutes a week at shooting practice. Freestyle kids practise for 2 hours every week with 100 balls until scoring becomes intuitive.



In Game of Cones, kids aim small and miss small.

MOVEMENT

Kids need Soccer skills to control the ball. They need natural skills for the other 95% of the game.

Each Soccer player has the ball for 5% of the game. A coaching system teaches Soccer skills so that players can control the ball. A learning program develops intelligence, character, confidence, energy, drive and talent so that any player can control the game.

We spend so much time telling kids what to do with the ball that we never discover what they can do without it. Some kids pass the ball and then they stand still and admire their pass. The wall pass is the quickest way to identify the kids who stand and wait. Freestyle kids learn to pass and move, give and go, hit and run.

Confidence is the greatest goal in Soccer. Some kids stand dead still and stay dead quiet because they're dead scared of being dead wrong. Freestyle kids drive, strive, thrive and come alive. They discover how to put the fun back into the fundamentals.



No doubt, no fear, no limits and no worries.

DECISION

We coach each kid for 10 years but we can't spare 15 minutes to discover what they need to improve.

Most kids don't know what they're playing at. When a group of elite players stand in a circle juggling a Soccer ball, they can't even put 10 passes together without dropping the ball. There's nothing wrong with their Soccer skills. They stand dead still and remain dead quiet waiting to see what happens. Any player can look good when we tell them what to do but they get lost when they have to look, listen, call, think, move and make decisions.

It's good to have players who can do what they're told but it's so much better to have players who can do it without being told. Freestyle kids train because they want to, not because they have to. They learn to believe in themselves and call the shots.

Any Soccer kid can trap, pass, dribble, shoot, screen and head the ball. The most difficult skill in Soccer is choosing the right one. Some kids pass when they can shoot and some shoot when they can pass. Quick decisions depend on practice not theory.



We'll never know that rubber cones are safer than broken plastic until the first serious injury occurs.

BELIEF

***Ordinary training produces ordinary players.
Extra training produces extraordinary players.***

Belief is the key to achievement in sport. Our beliefs drive our actions. If we believe that kids lack the talent to reach the top, we search for mistakes to correct and teach every kid to be the same so they look, think, stretch, move, kick and play the same way. If we believe we can improve any kid in 5 minutes, we search for their talent and discover how good kids really are.

In a coaching system, we see what we believe. Two opposing coaches watch the same incident. One sees a perfect tackle and the other sees a blatant foul. We see what we want to see. If we only focus on winning or making money, we lose sight of what the game can do for kids. If we think kids lack skill, we've got a lot to teach. If we think kids lack talent, we've got a lot to learn.



***Interactive smart drills are designed to identify
and develop what individuals need to improve.***

REPETITION

Nobody knows that all kids need 200 ball touches before their eye/foot coordination can kick in.

In a game of skill, no coach has ever wondered how many kicks kids need before kickoff. Kids work it out themselves. If they juggle a ball 30 times, the last ten numbers are greater than the first ten. Initial touches are too hard or too soft, too high or too low, too early or too late, too fast or too slow, too loose or too tight, too left or too right. Mistakes disappear after 200 touches.

At the cognitive level, kids are stiff and mechanical so they stab at the ball. At the associative level (100 kicks), players develop their timing, rhythm, balance and coordination so they can strike through the ball. At the intuitive level (200 kicks), they have the confidence to look, think, move, control, mind, body and ball. If we tell kids to score goals, they run forward and lose possession. If we tell kids to keep possession they learn how to score goals. We see what we expect to see. Some of us only see mistakes to correct and some of us see talent to develop. What can you see?



Freestyle kids shoot for two hours with 100 balls

CHALLENGE

Ordinary kids are scared of being different and different kids are scared of being ordinary.

Some people look at a challenge and can only see a problem. Others look at a problem and can only see a challenge. Freestyle Soccer kids tackle what the rest of us try to ignore or avoid. They learn to juggle, head, shoot and use their weak foot. They discover what they don't know and practise what they can't do.

Sport should be a challenge. Some have a fear of failure, fear of the unknown, fear of being challenged, fear of making mistakes, fear of new and different ideas. And the kids are just the same. A lot of talented kids are too scared to think outside the goal square, venture out of their comfort zone, move and improve, believe and achieve. It's easy to teach kids to kick and shoot but Freestyle kids want to learn how to pass the ball and score goals.

The easiest way to play safe and stay the same is to avoid anything that scares us and ignore anything that challenges us. Freestyle kids don't believe in best practice. They look for better practice where they can get thousands of repetitive ball touches. The most effective way to motivate any Freestyle Soccer kid is to tell them what they can't do and then watch how they do it.



All kids need the freedom to express themselves.

INTUITION

Kids need somewhere to make lots of noise, lots of moves, lots of decisions and lots of mistakes.

Awareness is the ability to see and hear what isn't there. We need to see the kids who stand still and hear the kids who stay quiet. The most important goal for any kid and teenager is their confidence. Kids go to skate parks, BMX tracks and Soccer fields to play their own game without direction, correction, protection or rejection from well meaning adults. Some coaches honestly believe that they're helping Soccer kids by constantly telling them what's wrong with them instead of identifying and developing what's right with them. Kids are the first to know if they make mistakes. They learn to play and they play to learn.

Soccer kids practise what makes them feel good and they avoid what makes them feel bad. Every kid wants to shoot at goal. We can search the leading football academies of the world to learn about Australian Soccer kids but the answers are standing right in front of us waiting to be discovered and developed. Some Soccer clubs are more worried about watching the grass grow in the goalmouth than watching kids grow to their full potential.



Every Soccer oval should have a Shooting Gallery where kids are free to challenge their own limits.

COMMUNICATION

*If we can develop kids to suit the system we coach,
we can develop a system to suit the kids we coach.*

It's very simple. We teach kids what not to call, not what to call. The most common call is 'mine' because coaches tell kids not to say 'mine' so that's the one word that sticks in their heads. In a game of skill, the last sideline call kids want to hear is 'big kick, big kick'. Most coaches don't teach kids how to communicate. There are 20 calls that any team can use to increase possession. It takes 5 minutes to explain these calls. In the second week, it takes 5 minutes to test kids on the key calls. By the third week, kids only need 5 minutes to recognise and activate their 20 calls.

Communication is a two way process. Any national organisation that can deliver orders to the grassroots level can use the same communication network to learn about every Soccer kid. They just need to observe, think, ask questions and analyse the data. Every coaching organisation already has the communication system established to identify the strengths, weaknesses, skills, talents, fears, needs and limits of every Australian Soccer kid. They have the means to discover what kids need to improve. It should be easy to develop a skills program for every Soccer kid.



The Juggling Circle teaches kids to move and call

SAFETYNET

The Safetynet assesses the needs of every 10 year old Soccer kid so that no kid ever gets left behind.

We can learn a lot about every Soccer kid in 5 minutes. Players who lack confidence step back to create more time and space. One footed jugglers hop awkwardly and lose balance. Flat footed kids stab at the ball. Well trained kids keep both feet firmly on the ground. Freestyle kids get up on their toes. Kids, who don't know how to call, shout 'mine'. Most kids aim big and miss big. Freestyle kids learn to aim small and miss small.

Frustrated kids use force if they lack the skill to beat opponents. Kids who are scared of criticism stand dead still and stay dead quiet. Strikers who are scared of missing shots, pass the ball in front of goal. Kids who are scared of the high ball deliberately arrive late to contest the goal kicks. Resilient kids make more mistakes because they challenge their limits. Most kids think 'ball and goal'. Freestyle kids think 'space and possession'. A coaching system teaches us to read the play. A learning program teaches us to read the players so we know how to improve them.



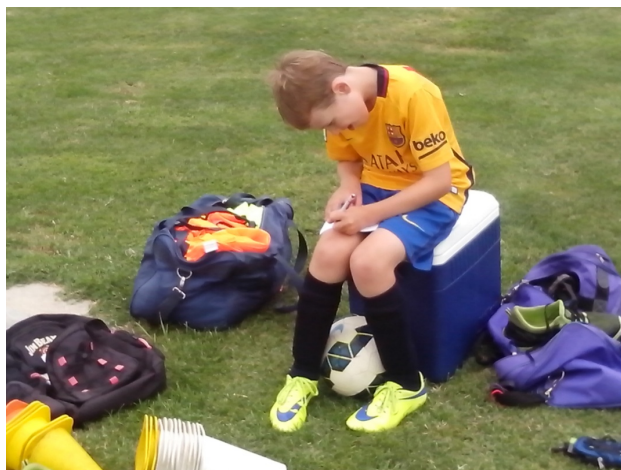
We all look at the same game but we only see what we want to see. We lose sight of the kids.

FUTURE SOCCER

Kids look at what we do and wonder why and then look at what we don't do and wonder why not.

Sport was created so that everyone could challenge their limits. School sport was developed at Rugby School in the 19th century so resilient kids could take more responsibility and make their own decisions. Somewhere along the way, we've lost sight of what sport is about. It's easy to program skilful kids to replace mechanical robots and give them artificial intelligence so they all look, think, stretch, move, kick and play the same way.

Each generation is smarter and more talented than the previous generation. That's Soccerevolution. The next generation of Soccer kids will discover personal trainers, shooting galleries, goal scoring academies, rubber safety cones, close ballwork in pairs, the power of one on one, motional intelligence, 200 kicks, motor skills, interactive smart drills, the Game of Cones, fusion drills, close repetition drills, power drills, precision drills, rapid fire drills, performance measurement and their natural talent.



Freestyle kids learn to think for themselves and measure their own improvement.