






Guideline (GUI)

U7 Coaching Program Curriculum

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Errors or Omissions

Big Country Soccer Association has provided this manual to the membership as a guide for the operation of the organization and all sports. Any errors or omissions contained herein shall not supersede the by-laws, policies, procedures, or guidelines of the Association. All changes must be passed by majority vote at a duly constituted meeting of the Association. Any changes to the manual shall be included in the next edition. The by-laws of the association supersede any guideline or policy should a conflict occur.

Document Revision History

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0	17-Jan-2024	Official Issue.	Duncan Hawkins	Ivo Tollner	Cody Craig
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Section	Description



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1 Vision

The Big Country Soccer Association aspires to be an outstanding educational-athletic organization that provides a high-quality experience for every athlete. A high-quality experience is one in which every athlete:

1. Is coached using the principles of Positive Coaching,
2. Has fun playing the game,
3. Feels like an important part of the team regardless of performance,
4. Learns “life lessons” that have value beyond the playing field; and
5. Learns the skills, tactics and strategies of the game and improves as a player.

2 Mission

The Big Country Soccer Association is committed to providing well-organized soccer recreation appropriately structured to accommodate any level of play commensurate with our players’ individual abilities, potential, and interest and to promoting a positive youth sports culture that teaches life lessons and “honors the game” for all players in the Big Country, Alberta area. Our sporting philosophy is based on the following objectives:

1. To provide and support programs for the involvement and enjoyment of members of the Big Country Soccer Association in support of a long-term development of the sport of soccer.
2. To encourage and welcome parental support in youth soccer development.
3. To encourage good sportsmanship through development and competition in the sport.
4. To ensure all participants in all programs have fun and equal opportunity to actively participate in the sport.
5. To develop each athlete's basic skills and conditioning that they can apply to the sport.
6. To develop good coaching and officiating capabilities in the sport.
7. To create and maintain a spirit of friendly competition without fear of bullying.

3 Scope

This coaching curriculum is for the U7 (from 5 years of age to under 7 years of age, regardless of gender) group and includes the priorities for coaches to develop players in this age group. This document is in support of Long-Term Development practices for youth soccer by Alberta Soccer Association (ASA), and Canada Soccer Association (CSA).



4 Coaching Guidelines for U7 Age Group

4.1 Aim:

To allow players of all ages and abilities to develop to their full potential, in an ENJOYABLE, CHALLENGING and POSITIVE environment.

4.2 Objectives:

- a) Create a clear and simple pathway for player development.
- b) Keep the player at the center of the development process. Ensure that the player has as much time on the ball as possible in every session.
- c) The basic principles of the game are to be coached with focus on the player's development with skills and technique. The introduction of positions and playing formation will be introduced to this age group.
- d) Acknowledge that players will develop differently. A coach needs to be flexible in how instructions are provided.

4.3 To be successful at this age group the coach needs to have these traits:

- Flexibility – Children all progress at different rates so be aware of players understanding instructions. Recognize when something is not working and change it.
- A sense of humor – laugh with your players and make it FUN. They will enjoy the experience more and want to come back next time.
- A very positive attitude, give generous praise often; remember they are learning the game, and often this may be their first experience of soccer coaching. Positive reinforcement will keep their confidence high and again, make them want to return.
- And lots and lots of energy – If you're energetic and dynamic in your coaching style the kids will feed off this and remain more focused in the session.

5 References

The following referenced documents are to be considered the latest edition and indispensable for the application of this document.

Table 1 – References

Document Number	Title
	Canada Soccer Quality Soccer Provider Standards



Document Number	Title
	Canada Soccer Guide to Management Operations
	Alberta Soccer Standards for Quality Soccer Guidebook
BCSA-POL-023	Big Country Soccer Association Long Term player Development Policy
BCSA-GOV-007	Big Country Soccer Association General Rules and Regulations
BCSA-GUI-005	Big Country Soccer Association Parents Guide
BCSA-GUI-006	Big Country Soccer Association Coaching Guideline

6 Acronyms and Defined Terms

For this document, the following acronyms and terms apply.

6.1 Acronyms

Table 2 – Acronyms

Acronym	Definition
ASA	Alberta Soccer Association
BCSA	Big Country Soccer Association
CSA	Canada Soccer Association
FIFA	Federation International Football Association
LTPD	Long Term Player Development

6.2 Definitions

Table 3 – Definitions

Term	Definition
Registered Member	This is the community that is registered with BCSA to register their players to compete in the Association with other registered teams. These communities will have their players registered with Alberta Soccer Association.



7 Responsibilities

- 7.1** The following list of responsibilities are not all encompassing. Additional responsibilities may be assigned out, as required, when there are tasks and/ or actions required to represent Big Country Soccer Association, its players, parents, coaches, and the governing soccer associations that Big Country Soccer Association is required to adhere to.
- 7.2** President of Big Country Soccer Association is responsible for the following:
- a) Ensure that the most up to date information on player development is available to coaches assigned teams for Big Country Soccer Association.
 - b) Respond to concerns, as necessary, raised by those involved with Big Country Soccer Association.
 - c) Participate with the disciplinary process, as required.
- 7.3** Vice- President of Big Country Soccer Association is responsible for the following:
- a) Develop the coaching curriculums for the various age groups for Big Country Soccer Association.
 - b) Provide support to the coaches for the development and support of Big Country Soccer Association coaches.
 - c) Provide support in the development of coaching practice plans used by coaches in support of the four-corner model for youth player development.
 - d) Respond to concerns, as necessary, raised by those involved with Big Country Soccer Association.
 - e) Participate with the disciplinary process, as required.
- 7.4** Coaches for Big Country Soccer Association are responsible for the following:
- a) Following the age group curriculum for the age group they are assigned to coach on behalf of Big Country Soccer Association.
 - b) Only use drills and practice plans that are age appropriate for the specific curriculum and priorities according to the four-corned model for youth player development.
 - c) Ensure the practice is organized before players arrive to their practice sessions.
 - d) Request support from the President and/ or Vice-President for Big Country Soccer Association on practices plans and drills that support the age group, as necessary.



8 U7 Four Corner Development Curriculum

8.1 The Four Corner LTPD model consists of technical, psychological, physical, and social/ emotional components. Each corner of the model reflects a wide aspect of a player’s development that has to be considered. The gradual progressive development of players is fundamental to the enjoyment, technical competency, and retention in the game.



Figure 1 – Four Corner Development Model

8.2 U6-U7 Players

The physical attributes indicated below should be introduced and developed through fundamental games and activities that will introduce the players to roles and field positions in the team. Continue with development of physical skills introduced in the Active Start phase (U4-U5 age group), i.e., running, jumping, hopping, skipping, throwing, catching etc. Agility, Balance, and Coordination (ABC’s)

8.3 Development grid for this age group is as follows:

PRIORITY KEY	1= HIGH	2= MID	3= LOW	4= NOT APPLICABLE
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Table 4 – U7 Development Grid

DEVELOPMENT STAGE	FUNDEMANETAL START	
PHYSICAL	U6	U7
Agility	2	2
Balance	3	2
Coordination	3	2

DEVELOPMENT STAGE	FUNDAMANETAL START	
TECHNICAL	U6	U7
Dribbling	1	1
Shooting	1	1
Running with the Ball	1	1



DEVELOPMENT STAGE	FUNDEMANETAL START	
	U6	U7
PHYSICAL		
Stamina	4	4
Strength	3	3
Speed	2	1
Suppleness	3	3
Acceleration	3	2
Reaction	3	2
Basic Motor Skills	1	1
Perception	1	1
Awareness	1	1
Other Sports (games)	1	1

DEVELOPMENT STAGE	FUNDAMANETAL START	
	U6	U7
TECHNICAL		
Ball Control	3	1
Passing	3	3
Receiving	3	1
Shielding the Ball	4	4
Finishing	4	4
1v1 Defending	4	4
1v1 Attacking	3	3
Heading	4	4
Crossing the Ball	4	4

DEVELOPMENT STAGE	FUNDAMENTAL START	
	U6	U7
SOCIAL/ EMOTIONAL		
Listening	2	2
Cooperation	2	2
Communication	1	1
Sharing	3	2
Problem-Solving	3	2
Decision-Making	3	2
Empathy	3	2
Patience	3	2
Respect/ Discipline	2	1
Fair Play/ Honesty	3	2

DEVELOPMENT STAGE	FUNDAMENTAL START	
	U6	U7
PSYCHOLOGICAL		
Motivation	1	1
Self-Confidence	1	1
Competitiveness	4	3
Concentration	3	3
Commitment	4	3
Self-Control	3	3
Determination	3	3

8.4 U7 Four-Corner Focus:

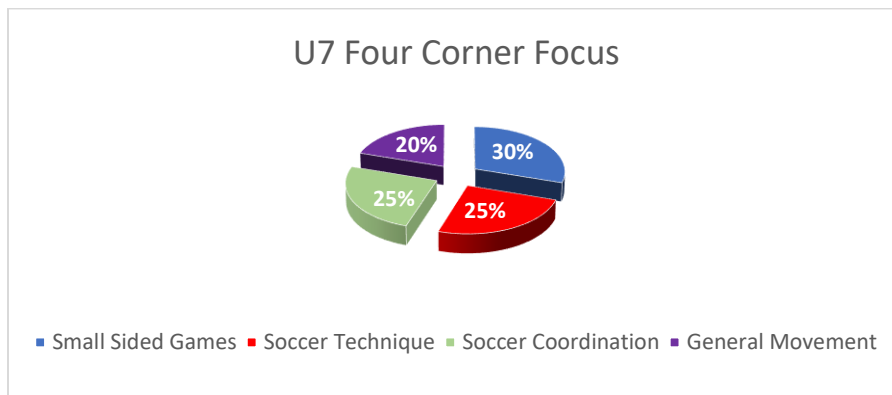


Figure 2 – U7 Four Corner Focus



8.5 U7 Practice Focus:

Table 5 – U7 Practice Focus

FUNDAMENTAL PRACTICE OBJECTIVES		PRACTICE CONTENT DISTRIBUTION
TECHNICAL	Introduce basic individual technique	50%
PHYSICAL	Develop agility, balance, and coordination with and without the ball	30%
TACTICAL	No tactical development at this age group	0%
SOCIAL	Increase confidence with the ball and playing with teammates	20%
PSYCHOLOGICAL	Create a safe and positive environment with lots of meaningful praise	Included in all practices.

9 Practice Coaching Points

9.1 Note the following coaching points for organizing and coaching this age group:

- Create a stimulating learning environment where the atmosphere is freedom and FUN.
- Every player is to have a ball. This is to encourage player developing confidence and being comfortable with the ball.
- Organize your practice to have all the children active, all the time.
- Playing situations work best for teaching understanding and basic game sense.
- Game formats can progress from 3v3 to 5v5 as the children grow.
- During small-sided games everyone should play all positions.
- Let your players make decisions, expose them to working out problems and coming up with solutions.
- More focus on coaching the correct technique for the skills however, players should only be expected to execute as a basic level at this age.

9.2 Note the following coaching methodology with this age group:

- Keep information brief and positive.
- Show them what you want. Demonstrate the activities and games.
- Player Centred Coaching – let them make decisions, solve problems based on what they see and experience.
- Keep the environment positive and happy.
- Allow and encourage creativity and improvisation. Create the freedom to express themselves.



- f) Keep the practices flowing, with limited stops. This will be based on how well organized the coach is with the practice plans and drills.
- g) Encourage and celebrate success.
- h) Be flexible, allow the players to deviate and be creative.
- i) Keep it safe and age-appropriate.

10 Fundamental Coaching Measures

10.1 Before players move up to the next age group bracket, coaches should have exposed the players to and taught them the following measures which will aid in their development at the next level:

Table 6 – U7 Coaching Measures

TECHNICAL		
Dribbling the Ball	Right Foot and Left Foot; Introduce Opponent	Players are not introduced to dribbling at an opponent, introduce change of speed and direction with the head up.
Shooting the Ball	Right Foot and Left Foot	Using both feet over short distances, work on accuracy.
Running with the Ball	Right Foot and Left Foot	Using both feet, towards goal, away from goal. Vary speed with head/ eyes up.
Turning with the Ball	Right Foot or Left Foot	Using both feet, introduce inside and outside turns with head/ eyes up.
Receiving the Ball	Right Foot and Left Foot; Introduce Thigh and Chest	Players are now introduced to underhand served ball to control on thigh and chest. Introductions to inside and outside of both feet to receive.
Passing the Ball	Right and Left Foot	Over short distances using both feet. Introducing the player to awareness of the play and players on the field through head/ eyes up.

PHYSICAL		
Agility	Moving in quick controlled movements	Jumping, hopping, skipping, twisting, bounding can be incorporated into games and activities.
Balance	Right and Left Foot	Balance is improving with body in a variety of positions, one foot, crouched, on toes, etc.
Coordination	Using Small-Sided Games	Ability to twist and turn, change direction, keeping movements and body under control.
Stamina	Using Small-Sided Games	Using fun small-sided games and technical activities, endurance will improve.
Strength	No weights are to be used	Using players own body weight can be incorporated into warm-up and games.



PHYSICAL		
Speed	Multi-Directional	Improvement in multi-directional, linear, and lateral speeds can be utilized during this stage of development.
Suppleness/ Flexibility	Dynamic Stretching	Utilize in warm-up mimicking soccer movements/ dynamic movement exercises i.e., FIFA 11+ Kids Program.
Acceleration	Activities and Exercises	Use fun games to introduce quick change of speed.
Reaction	For a variety of starting positions	Reaction speeds improve from laying, sitting, crouching, standing, jogging positions. Good to implement in warm-up drills.

SOCIAL/ EMOTIONAL		
Listening	Listen Quietly	Players will have improved ability to listen to details. Continue to be brief with information.
Cooperation	With Coach and Teammates	Although still egocentric, players will start to develop basic cooperation skills to participate in team activities.
Communication	Verbal Communication	Communication with teammates is improving, giving information and encouragement.
Sharing	Sharing the Ball and Ideas	Players will now start to understand that passing can help them be successful i.e., the ball will always move faster with a good pass over a player who is running with the ball.
Problem-Solving	Working out Mistakes	Players will display a basic understanding of working through their mistakes to correct them.
Decision-Making	Activity/ Game Decisions	Starting to work out simple activity or game related decisions. Some may need assistance. Coach will introduce the player to revisit the decision to see if there is a better option to take.
Empathy	Assisting Others in Game	Starting to assist others with their problems in the activity/ game.
Patience	Patience with Themselves and Others	Displaying an increased ability to show patience with themselves and teammates as they work through mastering the skills and techniques.
Respect/ Discipline	Others	Players are able to respect other players' equipment and space. Behavior is more social.

PSYCHOLOGICAL/ MENTAL		
Motivation	Fun, rewarding activities	Improved players' motivation, through involvement in fun, exciting, challenging, and successful activities.
Self-Confidence	Safe and positive environment	Players are now willing to express themselves more. Not afraid to make mistakes.
Competitiveness	Displaying Desire to be Successful	Players are displaying the desire to be successful in practice activities and small-sided games.
Concentration	An Ability to Stay on Task	Improved attention span, improved ability to stay on task for slightly longer periods.



PSYCHOLOGICAL/ MENTAL		
Commitment	Apply Themselves at Practice Completing Activities	Players are happy attending majority of practices and games. Will complete activities and exercises during practices.
Self-Control	In Control of Emotions	While in stressful situations, players are starting to show an improvement in controlling their emotions.
Determination	Displays a Determination to Complete Tasks	Starting to not give up easily, starting to display a determination to continue to work on the skill/ technique.

10.2 At this stage of development, it is important for the coach to create and/ or use a pre-formed practice plan that will support this stage of player development. One way for the coach to get the players to start thinking about their basic understanding of the activity/ game is to ask them questions during the practice.

The questions must be low order questions, simple enough for the player to both understand and be able to provide an answer back to the coach. By asking the player questions about their decisions made during the activity/ game, the player will start to think about decisions at a deeper level that will help improve their development and performance. By thinking more and working out the most basic of activity/ game challenges, players will start to understand the game more.

This question-and-answer methodology, along with guided discovery, helps improve the learning environment for the players. At the end of every practice, the coach should ideally ask the players to name the things they have learned in order to identify knowledge retention and make available opportunities for the players to seek clarification through asking questions back to the coach. Big Country Soccer Association strongly recommends that all coaches at this age group level adopt this style of coaching to support player development.