



Guideline (GUI)

U9 Coaching Program Curriculum

BCSA-GUI-015-00

Rev. 0 | 17-Jan-2024

Published

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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

Rev	Date	Description	Originator	Checker	Approver
0	17-Jan-2024	Official Issue.	Duncan Hawkins	Ivo Tollner	Cody Craig
A	28-Dec-2023	This is the initial DRAFT of this Guideline document.	Duncan Hawkins	Cody Craig	Cody Craig

Current Revision Description

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 U9 (from 7 years of age to under 9 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 U9 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 extension of positions and playing formation will be provided to this age group in the lead-up to introducing tactical coaching in the next 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 U9 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 U8-U9 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 expanded on in the Fundamental Start phase (U6-U7 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 – U9 Development Grid

DEVELOPMENT STAGE	LEARN TO TRAIN START	
PHYSICAL	U8	U9
Agility	1	1
Balance	1	1
Coordination	1	1

DEVELOPMENT STAGE	LEARN TO TRAIN START	
TECHNICAL	U8	U9
Dribbling	1	1
Shooting	1	1
Running with the Ball	1	1



DEVELOPMENT STAGE	LEARN TO TRAIN START	
	U8	U9
PHYSICAL		
Stamina	3	2
Strength	3	2
Speed	1	1
Suppleness	3	2
Acceleration	2	1
Reaction	2	1
Basic Motor Skills	1	1
Perception	1	1
Awareness	1	1
Other Sports (games)	1	1

DEVELOPMENT STAGE	LEARN TO TRAIN START	
	U8	U9
TECHNICAL		
Ball Control	1	1
Passing	1	1
Receiving	1	1
Shielding the Ball	3	3
Finishing	3	3
1v1 Defending	3	3
1v1 Attacking	2	2
Heading	4	4
Crossing the Ball	3	2

DEVELOPMENT STAGE	LEARN TO TRAIN START	
	U8	U9
SOCIAL/ EMOTIONAL		
Listening	1	1
Cooperation	1	1
Communication	1	1
Sharing	1	1
Problem-Solving	2	1
Decision-Making	1	1
Empathy	2	2
Patience	2	2
Respect/ Discipline	1	1
Fair Play/ Honesty	1	1

DEVELOPMENT STAGE	LEARN TO TRAIN START	
	U8	U9
PSYCHOLOGICAL		
Motivation	1	1
Self-Confidence	1	1
Competitiveness	2	2
Concentration	3	2
Commitment	2	2
Self-Control	2	2
Determination	2	2

8.4 U9 Four-Corner Focus:

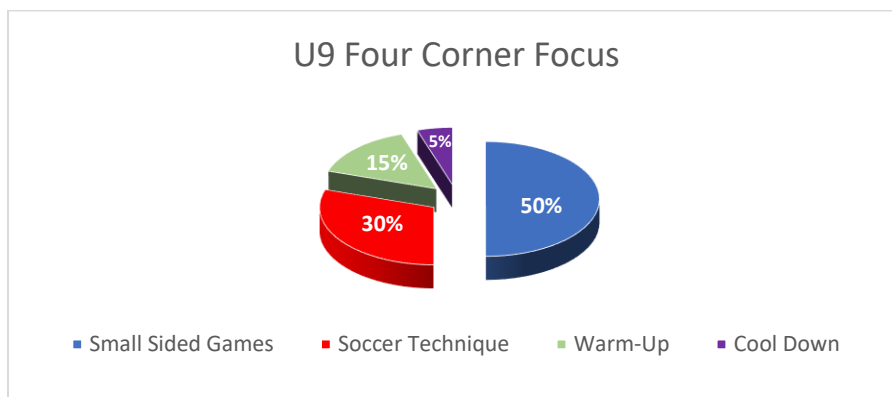


Figure 2 – U9 Four Corner Focus



8.5 U9 Practice Focus:

Table 5 – U9 Practice Focus

LEARN TO TRAIN PRACTICE OBJECTIVES		PRACTICE CONTENT DISTRIBUTION
TECHNICAL	Improve possession and position	70%
PHYSICAL	Improve speed, agility, balance, and coordination with and without the ball	17%
TACTICAL	Introduction of basic tactical concepts	3%
SOCIAL	Cooperate with teammates to accomplish task	10%
PSYCHOLOGICAL	Create a safe and positive environment with development challenges	Included in all practices.

9 Practice Coaching Points

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

- a) Create a stimulating learning environment where the atmosphere is freedom and FUN.
- b) Every player is to have a ball. This is to encourage player developing confidence and being comfortable with the ball.
- c) Continue with ball mastery skills.
- d) Develop player abilities to look up; to be aware of their teammates and the play.
- e) Organize your practice to have all the children active, all the time.
- f) Playing situations work best for teaching understanding. Introduction of combination plays with 2 or more players.
- g) Develop shooting skills at longer distances, volleys, chip shots, using different striking skills.
- h) Small-sided games to reinforce the skills and tactical instructions.
- i) During small-sided games, the play is more suited for transferring the skill directly to how the game is to be played.
- j) Let your players make decisions, expose them to working out problems and coming up with solutions.
- k) More focus on coaching the correct technique for the skills. Redoing basic skills is required to help stimulate growth and understanding of the skill.

9.2 Note the following coaching methodology with this age group:

- a) Keep information brief and positive.
- b) Guiding players in the right direction and avoiding telling them how to get there.



- c) Player Centred Coaching – let them make decisions, solve problems based on what they see and experience. Encourage the player to work through failures.
- d) Keep the environment positive but the training to be more intensive.
- e) Developing an independent creative player to learn the skills of decision making. Too much direction creates players dependant on the coach for direction.
- 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) Positive reinforcement for good behaviour or skill execution will allow other players to strive for same reward. Be flexible, allow the players to deviate and be creative.
- h) Introduction of the tactics of the game i.e., the positioning and movement of the positions during aspects of the game.

10 Learn to Train 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 – U9 Coaching Measures

TECHNICAL		
Dribbling the Ball	Right Foot and Left Foot	Maintain close control at pace and in tight situations.
Shooting the Ball	Right Foot and Left Foot	Accurate more powerful shots from longer distances, bent, chips, and volleys.
Running with the Ball	Right Foot and Left Foot	Running at various speeds with the ball under control with head up/ eyes up.
Ball Control	Ball Mastery	Continue improvement of ball mastery in reduced spaces, more teammates, and opponents.
Passing the Ball	Right and Left Foot	Players should be passing the ball accurately over distances 10m – 25m. Introduction of chesting the ball.
Receiving the Ball	Right Foot and Left Foot, Chest and Thighs	Receiving the ball from ground and air whilst under some pressure.
Heading	Using Forehead and Eyes on Ball	Not recommended to use fully inflated ball. Should only be introduced with a deflated ball for introducing the technique to older players.
Shielding the Ball	Using the Body to Protect the Ball	Introduction to shielding the ball including understanding how to use the body to protect the ball with head up/ eyes up without causing a foul.
Crossing	Right Foot and Left Foot	Crossing the ball into the penalty area, using various types of crosses (low, near post, far post, etc.)
Finishing	Scoring from Close Range	First touch finishing, volleys, passes, shots from close distances.



TECHNICAL

1v1 Defending	Defending as an Individual	Pressing, preventing forward play, preventing crosses.
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TACTICAL

Possession	Individual and Team's Ability to Retain Ball	Introduce later in the development stages. Understand angles and distances of support and that player mobility will allow team possession to take place.
Transition	Recognizing when the Ball is Lost or Retained	Introduce later in the development stages. Changing from attacking to defending and visa-versa.
Combination Play	Player Awareness of Combination Opportunities	Introduce later in the development stages. Recognition when wall passes, take over, set-up, etc. are available to play.
Switching Play	Taking up Correct Position to Allow Switch to Take Place	Introduce later in the development stages. The ability to pass the ball from one side the other quickly.
Playing out from the Back	Confident and Comfortable Playing Close to Own Net	Introduce later in the development stages. The ability to be confident with the ball and to build the play from the defensive positions transitioning to the attack.
Attacking Principles	Players Understanding	Introduce later in the development stages. Introduce players to attacking plays.
Pressing	Understanding when to Press	Introduce later in the development stages. Individual pressing, closing down the ball carrier and taking a posture and position to slow down the ball carrier and limit forward options.
Retreat	Understanding when to Retreat and to where	Introduce later in the development stages. Individually and as a group to get in-between the ball and the goal.
Recovery	Understanding when and where to Recover	Introduce later in the development stages. After getting beat, making correct recovery runs to get into a good defensive position.

PHYSICAL

Agility	Moving in quick controlled movements	Continued improvement in twisting, turning, etc. Can be further developed during warm-ups and cool downs i.e., FIFA 11+ Kids Program.
Balance	Right and Left Foot	Continued improvement; can now balance in more controlled and various positions. Can be further developed during warm-ups and cool downs i.e., FIFA 11+ Kids Program.
Coordination	Using Small-Sided Games	Multiple movements are smoother and more controlled. Can be further developed during warm-ups, cool downs, and small sided games.



PHYSICAL		
Stamina	Using Small-Sided Games	Low priority and is developed through practice activities and small-sided games. Avoid players standing around for periods of time.
Strength	No weights are to be used	Low priority but can be developed through activities and games that work with the player's own body weight.
Speed	Multi-Directional	Improvements in fast cadence of movements, developing further linear, lateral, and multi-directional speed using games and activities.
Suppleness/ Flexibility	Dynamic Stretching	Continue with the exercises that mimic movements that are required in sport i.e., dynamic movements. Should include whole body. Use FIFA+ Kids Program to support this.
Acceleration	Activities and Exercises	Should be developed using challenging, fun games that use acceleration as part of the activity.
Reaction	For a variety of starting positions	Continue to work on reaction speeds from laying down, sitting, crouching, standing, jogging positions. Can be developed during opening warm-up activities.
Basic Motor Skills	Moving in Quick, Controlled, Smooth Movements	Develop in fun games and activities.
Perception	Right Foot and Left Foot	Introduce and develop playing small-sided games.
Awareness	Using Small-Sided Games	Introduce and develop playing small-sided games.

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	Players now start to cooperate with each other more on and off the field.
Communication	Verbal Communication	Communication with teammates is improving, giving helpful performance information and encouragement. Communication with coach is improving.
Sharing	Sharing the Ball and Ideas	More advanced knowledge of understanding that passing can help them be successful as an individual and as a team. Sharing of basic knowledge is now introduced by players.
Problem-Solving	Working out Mistakes	Players will display a basic understanding of working through their mistakes to correct them. Players are now understanding that mistakes are part of the game and are helpful to their growth and development.
Decision-Making	Activity/ Decisions Game	Players are now working out simple game-related decisions. Some players may still need assistance based on individual confidence levels. Often basic core leadership qualities may start to emerge and develop.



SOCIAL/ EMOTIONAL		
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	Respecting Others and Displaying Good Behaviour	Players are able to respect other players' equipment and space. Behavior is more social. Now starting to respect match Officials and opponents.
Fair Play/ Honesty	Playing within the Laws of the Game	Better understanding of the basic laws of the game.

PSYCHOLOGICAL/ MENTAL		
Motivation	Fun, rewarding activities	Improved players' motivation, through involvement in fun, exciting, challenging, and successful activities. Player's success is now encouraging them to attempt more difficult tasks.
Self-Confidence	Safe and positive environment	Players are now willing to express themselves more. Not afraid to make mistakes. Creativity and expression is now starting to show itself more. Involve players in leading activities at practices. Continue to use positive reinforcement with players.
Competitiveness	Displaying Desire to be Successful	Players are displaying the desire to be successful in practice activities and small-sided games. As players get older and more experience, the coach may need to manage the competitiveness to ensure it is not harmful to any individual and/ or the team.
Concentration	An Ability to Stay on Task	Improved attention span, improved ability to stay on task for slightly longer periods. Involve players in lading tasks and making decisions at practice.
Commitment	Apply Themselves at Practice Completing Activities	Players are happy attending majority of practices and games. Will complete activities and exercises during practices. Be patient but make basic standards that players are to meet.
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. Players are starting to want to be better at each activity/ game. Often players will have individual goals for themselves.



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.