FORUM DEDICATED TO COACHES

Posted by STLCoach - 10 Mar 2009 09:00

WELL THIS FORUM THREAD HAS REALLY TAKEN OFF!

THANKS FOR TAKING THE TIME TO LOOK AT THE INFO.

I WILL CONTINUE TO POST IDEAS TO THE THREADS AND I HOPE THEY ARE USEFUL TO COACHES AND ULTIMATLY KEEP MORE KIDS PLAYING AND LEARNING THIS GREAT GAME OF SOCCER.

LET US KNOW IF YOU WOULD LIKE A FREE COACHES CLINIC FOR FORUM READERS.

IF WE GET ENOUGH REPLIES TO THIS THREAD WE WILL HAVE ONE OR 3 THROUGHOUT THE SPRING.

WITH ANY TOPIC WE POST PLEASE FEEL FREE TO REPLY.

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Re:FORUM DEDICATED TO COACHES

Posted by STLCoach - 09 Apr 2009 10:32

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4 PARTS OF THE FIELD

Posted by STLCoach - 16 Jun 2009 08:11

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thinking of the field in quarters.

Traditionally, coaches think of the field in thirds. The back third, the middle third and the attacking third.

The problem with this concept is when you start to think about these zones on a full sized field. If you are working with a field that is 120 yards long, when you cross from the middle third into the attacking third, you are still 39 yards from goal. Should you really think the same when you are 39 yards from goal as when you are 18 yards from goal? Continuing with this thought, would you act the same way 79 yards from goal as you would 41 yards from goal?

Instead, let's think in terms of fourths instead of thirds. The fourth of the field closest to the goal you are defending is the back fourth (this would be the 30 yards closest to your own goal on a 120 yard long field). The next fourth (from 30 yards to midfield) is the defending fourth. The next fourth would be the attacking fourth (from midfield to 30 yards from the goal you are attacking) and the last fourth is the final fourth (from 30 yards out and closer)

By breaking the field into fourths instead of thirds, it makes it much easier for the players to understand their responsibilities depending upon the area of the field they are in. Whether the player has the ball 6 yards from the goal they are defending or 26 yards, they will be able to see how the same rules apply. While being 79 yards from the goal you are attacking is very different than being 41 yards from the goal you are attacking, the reality is, being 89 yards from the goal you are attacking is very similar to be 61 yards away. Being 29 yards away from the goal you are attacking is similar enough to being 18 yards out.

Now to summarize the fourths of the field:

1. Back Fourth - Safety first
2. Defensive Fourth - Possess with the intention of progressing the ball
3. Attacking Fourth - Possess with the intention of trying to penetrate behind the defense
4. Final Fourth - Take chances and take shots

It's important to understand there is one big exception to these fourths. The goalkeeper and the last players back are ALWAYS in the back fourth of the field, regardless of where they are actually located on the field.

As an example, in the diagram below, it might appear that all yellow players are either in the attacking fourth or final fourth.

However, the player with the ball is the last player back (not counting the keeper) so has to think in terms of being in the back fourth. One mistake and the opponent goes straight to goal since there is no one, other than the keeper who can provide support.

Training teams to understand the fourths of the field and the responsibilities of each fourth and where the exceptions are will allow your teams to play smarter without having to exert any extra energy.

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Coaching Speeches

Posted by STLCoach - 13 Aug 2009 03:28

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Today's topic deals with coaching cliches.

A team goes up 2-0 and the coach says "2-0 is the most dangerous score in soccer". What does this mean? Would the coach prefer to only be leading 1-0? Or would it be better to be losing 2-0?

A team has beaten another team twice in the regular season and now has to play them in the playoffs and the coach says "it's hard to beat another team three times in the same season". Would he rather have lost both of these games?

A team is losing 4-0 at halftime and the coach says "let's get this back one goal at a time". Is there an alternative? Are there certain goals that are worth more than one point?

A team is winning 1-0 and the coach says "play as if it's 0-0". Are the players really able to completely change their mindset and forget the real score? Do tactics not change somewhat based on

the score?

Right before the team goes on the field for the start of the game the coach asks the team to "win one for your teammate who is injured and can't play today". Were the players going to try to lose until the coach gave this great Knute Rockne type speech?

Right before the game starts the coach reminds the players to "play until the final whistle". Were the players planning on stopping 10 minutes early until they were reminded of this by their fearless leader?

There are many other examples of "coach speak" where coaches say things because it's what they have heard others say. It doesn't have much meaning, it doesn't have a positive affect on their players and in many cases, it doesn't help at all.

Give some serious thought to what you will be telling your players. Realize, if you say the same thing every time, they will end up tuning you out. Say what is needed, avoid the cliches and remember that your players are a LOT smarter than you most likely give them credit for.

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Re:FORUM DEDICATED TO COACHES

Posted by STLCoach - 19 Aug 2009 08:55

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Today's topic deals with "learning to play the game as opposed to simply gaming the drill".

Recently, I was running a training session where we were working on spreading the field and switching the point of attack. One activity we did was to split the field into vertical thirds and when a team won the ball, they had to have the ball go through each of the thirds before the could score.

A situation arose where the defending team stopped defending 'honestly'. They were defending the drill and not the game of soccer. What I mean by this is when the team would lose the ball, they would quickly defend out wide to prevent the ball from being switched but would leave a direct path to the goal wide open.

While this was an effective tactic to win the drill, it wasn't effective in teaching the purpose behind the drill.

Because of this, I regularly teach players to play the game instead of just doing the drill.

While it might seem to defeat the purpose of the drill (or activity or exercise or whatever you want to call it), the reality is it helps the players understand the purpose of the exercise.

As an example if the center black player receives the ball from out wide and the drill encourages him to keep the ball going to the other side but the defenders are overplaying that pass, the center player should dribble to goal and score.
While some might argue "but that violates the rules of the drill", I would argue the spirit of the game prevails over the rules (and since I'm the coach, I win that argument!).

By making sure the players are learning to play the game instead of just gaming the drill, they will get a

lot more out of each of the activities

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PLAYING UP A LEVEL

Posted by STLCoach - 02 Sep 2009 02:35

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Today's topic deals with what to expect when you play up a level.

Many players and teams are about to enter new seasons and when you are now being asked to play against a higher level player, it's important to know what to expect.

Whether you are moving from middle school to high school, high school to college, or your club team is playing on a higher level (for example, your team won their league so have qualified to player in a higher league or you switched teams and are playing on a team that plays against better opponents) it's important to understand that teams at a higher level are better. They might be bigger or stronger or faster or more tactical or more technical but in some way, there is a reason they are at this higher level and it's important that you are prepared.

Probably the biggest adjustment players find when playing at a higher level is what happens in two 18 yard boxes.

As you play with and against players at a higher level, you will find that mistakes made near the 18 you are defending will more likely result in a goal for the opponent. While you might have gotten away with a mistake back there against lesser competition, against better players, they will punish your mistakes by scoring goals.

On the other side of the field, the defending near your attacking 18 will be much fiercer as you play at a higher level. Harder tackles, tighter marketing and less space.

While this might seem like a very obvious thing, it's one of the biggest shocks for most players when they move up a level. They make an early mistake in back and give up a goal and then realize they can't make these kind of mistakes anymore. Or, they receive a ball near the 18, think they have time to take an extra touch and before they know it, the goal scoring opportunity is gone.

Those players who truly understand the differences in the various levels are less likely to make these mistakes. Likewise, those players who truly understand the differences will be more likely to train to avoid these problems, rather than having to learn after the fact.

What worked at one level doesn't always work at the next level. Be prepared for greater focus and intensity inside each 18 and you are more likely to experience success.

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