



## EYSA's Youth Soccer Philosophy

EYSA supports a player development approach that focuses on developing each player's ability to make good decisions within the game (in other words, developing each player's Soccer IQ). The game requires players that can quickly "read" a situation on the field and make a split-second decision about what needs to happen next. Depending on the situation, the best decision may be to dribble to space, to retain possession with a pass to a teammate or to take a shot on goal.

### The Role of the Coach

EYSA expects coaches to cultivate a training environment that supports the development of each player's ability to make good decisions on their own. Coaches encourage the development of Soccer IQ by challenging players to think about their options, such as by asking "where is your help" or "who is open?" In contrast, a constant stream of instructions, such as "boot it" or "don't play with it," fosters panicked decisions and negates Soccer IQ. In order to keep up with the speed at which the game is played, EYSA seeks to develop players that see what is happening and know what to do, not players that wait for instruction.

### Training

Training activities should be designed to help players develop the technical skills that will complement their growing Soccer IQ. At every age level, players should spend the majority of their time in activities that involve frequent contact with the ball. Fitness and decision-making should be developed together through the use of small-sided games in which the pace is quick and the pressure is high as it will be in competitive matches.

### Style of Play

Emulating the most successful teams in the world, EYSA encourages a style of play that values possession. At the same time, players must understand that there are moments to take risks and create scoring opportunities. Coaches must focus on key skills that are necessary to play a possession style, including controlling the ball with a good "first touch," passing on the ground to a teammate, dribbling away from pressure and, of course, the Soccer IQ that helps the player decide which option is best for a particular situation. Especially at the higher age levels, players' skills should include executing combination plays (give/go, wall pass) and creating options through their movement without the ball.

Consistent with the strong team concept involved in the possession style of play, coaches should ensure that the team acts as a unit - "everyone attacks and everyone defends." Especially at the younger age levels, players should have the opportunity to play at forward, middle and back positions.

### EYSA's Role

In support of its player development philosophy, EYSA encourages participation in coaching courses and will reimburse the costs of MYSA courses. EYSA also is prepared to provide specific assistance to coaches regarding training plans and activities.