



Player Development and Winning

The following information details the Red Bulls Youth Training Programs philosophy on the topic of player development and winning.

- Player development and winning are often seen as two mutually exclusive concepts, with common perception being that one should be favored over the other. It is Red Bulls' position that if the former is approached correctly, then the latter will evolve naturally.
- Negative issues arise when the importance of winning is emphasized over that of player development. Focus is taken away from the evolution of the player and placed solely on the pursuit of positive short term results.
- Clubs can foster an appropriate balance in this equation by employing a player-centered philosophy, as opposed to one which is solely results-orientated.

The following table highlights the difference between these two approaches and how they can impact key areas of consideration:

Key consideration	Results-orientated	Player-centered
(1) Training Sessions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Weekly training sessions focus solely on the tactical process of winning the next match, as opposed to developing a long term technical foundation. • Weekly training sessions show no natural progression, and the overall seasonal training plan can become disjointed and confusing. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coach creates a season long training plan where training sessions build upon each other. • Coach does not feel pressured to try and fix each and every issue as they emerge. Progression of training sessions is logical, systematic, and easily replicated on a club-wide scale.
(2) Player Rotation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coach puts each player exclusively in their strongest position, thus creating one dimensional players. • Players lose the opportunity to experiment and learn the techniques and functions associated with each position. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coach periodically rotates positions without worrying about game results. • In the long term, players develop a deep understanding for each position so that they can adapt to various systems and formations in the future.
(3) Risk vs Reward	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coach discourages players from taking risks on the ball, to avoid relinquishing possession. • Creativity is stifled and the opportunity to learn through trial and error is lost. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coach encourages players to be creative, try new techniques, and take risks without fear of failure or of losing possession. • Ultimately, the transfer of learning from the training field to the game is enhanced.

(4) Playing Time	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stronger players are given the most playing time, with the less developed players given comparatively little. • The opportunities to learn vary as a function of playing time, meaning the disparity between the two extremes becomes greater over time. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Playing time is relatively balanced, allowing all players the same opportunities to learn. • With all other variables being equal, such as application and dedication, players are given the fairest chance to develop at the same rate.
(5) Flight Selection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teams are flighted artificially high, for the enhanced status of playing at an advanced level, or artificially low, for the self-esteem benefits of winning on a weekly basis. • Neither option appropriately challenges players, who need to be tested at, or just above their competencies. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teams are appropriately flighted to ensure they are challenged sufficiently without being out of their depth. • Players experience sufficient success to ensure retention, while still encountering the consistent challenges necessary to improve.
(6) Referee Interactions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coach contests the officials' calls, and looks to influence their decisions to positively impact the score line. • A poor example is set for players, who consequently do not learn the social values of honesty, integrity, and respect. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coach shows respect for both the officials and the integrity of the game. • Players are given a positive role model and ultimately learn key core values that will benefit them in the wider world outside the realm of sport.
(7) Competition	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coach focuses solely on normalized competition within training sessions, focusing exclusively on the outright winners in activities. • A select few individuals experience success on a frequent basis, thus establishing hierarchies and creating further disparity in self-efficacy and self-esteem. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Players are encouraged to measure success by self-referenced measures; being encouraged to set, and surpass their own individual targets. • A healthy sense of competition ensures all players experience both challenges and successes and have the same opportunity to maximize potential.
(8) Parents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parents look only at short term game results; rather than appreciating the gradual process of implementing a long term plan. • Parents are solely focused on the result of the game in question, sacrificing the processes that have been put in place to achieve sustained success. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parents allow the coaches to coach and the players to play, conveying one consistent message in a supportive, encouraging environment. • The main focus is on adhering to an established long term plan, regardless of short term outcomes.