

# Managing the U12 (5<sup>th</sup> & 6<sup>th</sup> grade) Game: Make it Fun!!

## Program Format:

- 15 min practice
  - o Consist of 2-3 activities focused upon the players having fun and mastering the ball
  - o Pick 2-3 activities from the U10-U12 Coaches Practice Guide; activities should have the same theme i.e. Dribbling, Passing, Shooting
- 45min game/scrimmage- 22min halves
  - o Play 9v9 if numbers allow, please reduce numbers if one team is short to keep teams even
  - o Randomly divided the players each week
  - o Unlimited substitutions with coaches doing their best to ensure all players get as close to equal playing time as possible
  - o Corner kicks, goal kicks, indirect and direct free kicks, penalty kicks and offside will be enforced
  - o Yellow cards and red cards can be given

## Focus for U12 (5<sup>th</sup> & 6<sup>th</sup> grade) Players: Mastery of the Ball

- The foundation for all future development is built upon players being comfortable with the ball at their feet.
- Players must mastery this ability first before things like attacking, defending, team shape, and tactics are learned.
- If mastery of the ball does not take place, players will be limited in their ability to successfully execute more complex aspects of the game.
- Find ways to teach, tell, and demonstrate dribbling abilities and mastering the ball
  - o Dribble fast by using your laces
  - o Change direction- using the inside, outside, bottom of your feet
  - o Change your speed
  - o Adjust the size of your touch to small when other players are close and bigger when players are not around to go faster
  - o Deception moves- feints, shot fakes, cuts

## Things to say to players during the game:

- Dribble!
- Don't panic, keep possession of the ball
- Great effort!
- Good idea!
- Find a pass- ask players to look for their teammates rather than just kicking the ball
- Make the space bigger- can teammates move away from the player with the ball to create space to make a pass or dribble
- Keep possession/ keep it for us

Things to avoid saying during the game:

- Kick it!
  - Smash it!
  - Get it out of there!
  - Boot it!
  - Stop dribbling or don't dribble there!
  - Be careful about the tone of voice and volume of your voice when coaching.
- We don't want players to panic when they get the ball because you are communicating to them in a very aggressive tone of voice and volume.

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