



Planning and Training

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INTRODUCTION

Training plan organization



The coach's work starts before arriving at the soccer field.

Planning the session correctly, for the week and the season, will help the coach identify the team's needs and deliver a more efficient training session. Properly preparing a training session gives the coach greater confidence with the players and a better understanding of how to adapt the exercises to the team's and players' needs on the field. A good coach is a good planner.

Using the age appropriate season-plan provided in the coaching guides, the coach will have the key tools to organize and plan the training session for the team. The numbers 1 to 5 will designate the importance of different technical, tactical, physical and psychosocial aspects of the game. For example, a number 5 in passing and receiving for the U14 age group means that this element is extremely important at that age.

Two teams of the same age group will have different ability levels and understanding of the game. In other words, even teams of the same age have different needs. For this reason, the exercises should be delivered according to a particular age group. This document contains the information necessary to create your own plan according to your team.

These are the steps to follow when preparing a plan:

SEASON PLAN

This section will help the coach to quickly organize the season into competitive periods, transition periods (in between competitive periods) and off-season periods in the case of the older age groups. For younger groups, it will be even more essential to have a broader vision of the objectives, content, distribution and means of use during the season.

MACROCYCLE OR 12-WEEK PROGRAM CYCLE

The coach can use this plan as it is presented in this document. This 12-week distribution of content ensures that all key elements in the curriculum are covered for each stage and age group. It is organized in two-week periods to give the player enough time to show significant improvement in the specific categories. Please note, this content distribution follows an appropriate order for developing the style and principles of play.

MICROCYCLE OR WEEK PROGRAM

This section helps the coach organize weekly training sessions. Each week has a main technical, tactical and physical objective specified in the macrocycle. However, each team is different and has its own learning dynamic. Therefore, the weekly plan is flexible. The team will evolve week after week and the coach must continually identify the team's needs.

SESSION

Sessions are the last step of the planning process. In this section the coach can see what sessions look-like for the different stages. Each session is structured the same way, including the following parts: warm-up, main part and scrimmage. The main part contains technical, tactical and physical exercises. The coach can use the exercises in the library to select appropriate drills for the team and create his/her own training sessions.

Some of the specific organization for the season applies only to the intermediate and advanced stages. The advanced and intermediate stages may change training organization throughout the season in order to be more efficient in competition. The initial and basic stages emphasize development consistency of session structure, in order to consolidate the basics of soccer.



PRINCIPLES OF SEASONAL PLANNING FOR DEVELOPMENT

Here is the organization for the season based on three **12-week cyclic periods**. Each one of these 12-week periods is called a **macrocycle**. This 12-week period will be similar in structure in all three stages of the season. *As coach, you can adapt and modify the length of the macrocycle depending on the needs of your team and season.*

Example structure for a season with three different periods for intermediate and advanced stages:

1. Competitive: Period when the team is training and playing games regularly.
2. Transition: Period when the team is training but not playing regularly.
3. Off-season: Period when the team is not training or playing regularly.

PERIODS	OFF	COMPETITIVE I			TRANSITION			COMPETITIVE II			OFF SEASON	
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9		
MONTHS	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	March	April	May	June	July

WHY IS IT IMPORTANT TO STRUCTURE THE SEASON FOR THE DIFFERENT AGE GROUPS? (THE NEXT FOUR POINTS APPLY ONLY TO INTERMEDIATE AND ADVANCED STAGES)

1. Players follow a repetitive 12-week program. The 12-week structure is repeated three times in the season with common objectives but different content according to the moment of the season.
2. The season is organized in 12-weeks periods so that during this time the player will build his game-understanding as well as develop the soccer-specific fitness necessary to perform in competition.
3. Characteristics for the different periods (e.g. Competitive I, Transition and Competitive II) are explained later in this document.
4. This organization gives structure to the content and make sure coaches not only cover all key elements of the game, but do so according to the age of the players. We know that in human development, a 6 year old player does not perceive the game as a 12 year old or as a 17 year old does.

IMPORTANT NOTES FOR THE TABLE ON THE NEXT PAGE

1. The technical, tactical and physical objectives will focus coaches' and players' attention on that particular objective for a two-week period. However, it does not mean that only that particular objective is covered in all training sessions. Instead, the specific objective will be covered in **at least** one training session during the two-week period. This ensures that the essential content for that specific age-group will be covered.
2. The coach will also cover other aspects of the game that the team needs to improve.
3. The arrow indicates the main objective for the two-week period.
4. Please, check the arrows in the content sheet by age in order to cover other specific, age-appropriate content.

Main objectives for the **12-week program** in the different stages are indicated in the sample below. The arrow indicates the main objective in that stage:

STAGE	TYPE	2 WEEKS	2 WEEKS	2 WEEKS	2 WEEKS	2 WEEKS	2 WEEKS
INITIAL U6 to U8	Technical	→ Dribbling	→ Shooting & RWB	→ Ball control & turning	→ Passing & receiving	→ 1v1 attacking	→ 2v1 attacking
	Physical	Coordination & balance	Generic speed & agility	Basic motor skills	Perception & awareness	Speed (acceleration + acyclic) and agility.	Perception & Awareness + BMS
	Technical	→ Passing & receiving	→ Shooting & RWB	→ Turning, Dribbling & 1v1 attacking	→ Receiving to turn, shooting	→ Ball control, turning & 1v1 defending	→ RWB, shielding the ball, shooting
	Tactical	Possession	Playing out from the back	Transition	Combination play	Finishing in the final third	Defending principles
BASIC U9 to U12	Attacking principles: 2v1, 3v1, 3v2, 4v3						
	Physical	Coordination & balance	Speed & agility	Perception & awareness	Speed & agility	Coordination & balance	Reaction & acceleration
	Tactical	→ Possession	→ Attacking principles	→ Playing out from the back	→ Transition & combination play	→ Finishing in the final third	→ Defending as a team – zonal defending
	Perception & awareness						
INTERMEDIATE U13 & U14	Technical	Passing & receiving, shooting	Shooting, running with the ball & ball control	Passing & receiving, dribbling and RWB	Turning & 1v1 defending	Aerial control & heading	Receiving to turn & shooting
	Physical	Aerobic capacity	Aerobic power	Glycolytic power	Speed & agility	General strength	Reaction & acceleration
	Tactical	→ Possession Playing out from the back Pressing	→ Attacking principles Transition Defending principles	→ Combination play Transition	→ Transition Switching play	→ Finishing in the final third Zonal defending	→ Counter attack Retreat & recovery
	Speed of play & defensive principles						
ADVANCED U15 to U18	Technical	Passing & receiving Shooting	Shooting Ball control	1v1 defending Turning	Receiving to turn Passing & Receiving	Crossing & finishing Aerial control & heading	Passing & receiving, ball control & shooting
	Physical	Aerobic power	Glycolytic power	Anaerobic atactic	Specific speed	Explosive strength	Acyclic speed
	General strength						

WEEKLY PLAN

Below applies only to intermediate and advanced stages

The game is the most demanding practice of the player's week. The intensity will decrease at the beginning of the week, increase closer to the level of game intensity at the middle of the week and then decrease again at the end of the week to provide the body enough time to recover for the game. These principles apply mainly to intermediate and advanced stage players.

The weekly plan is organized as indicated in the graphic:

1. TACTICAL

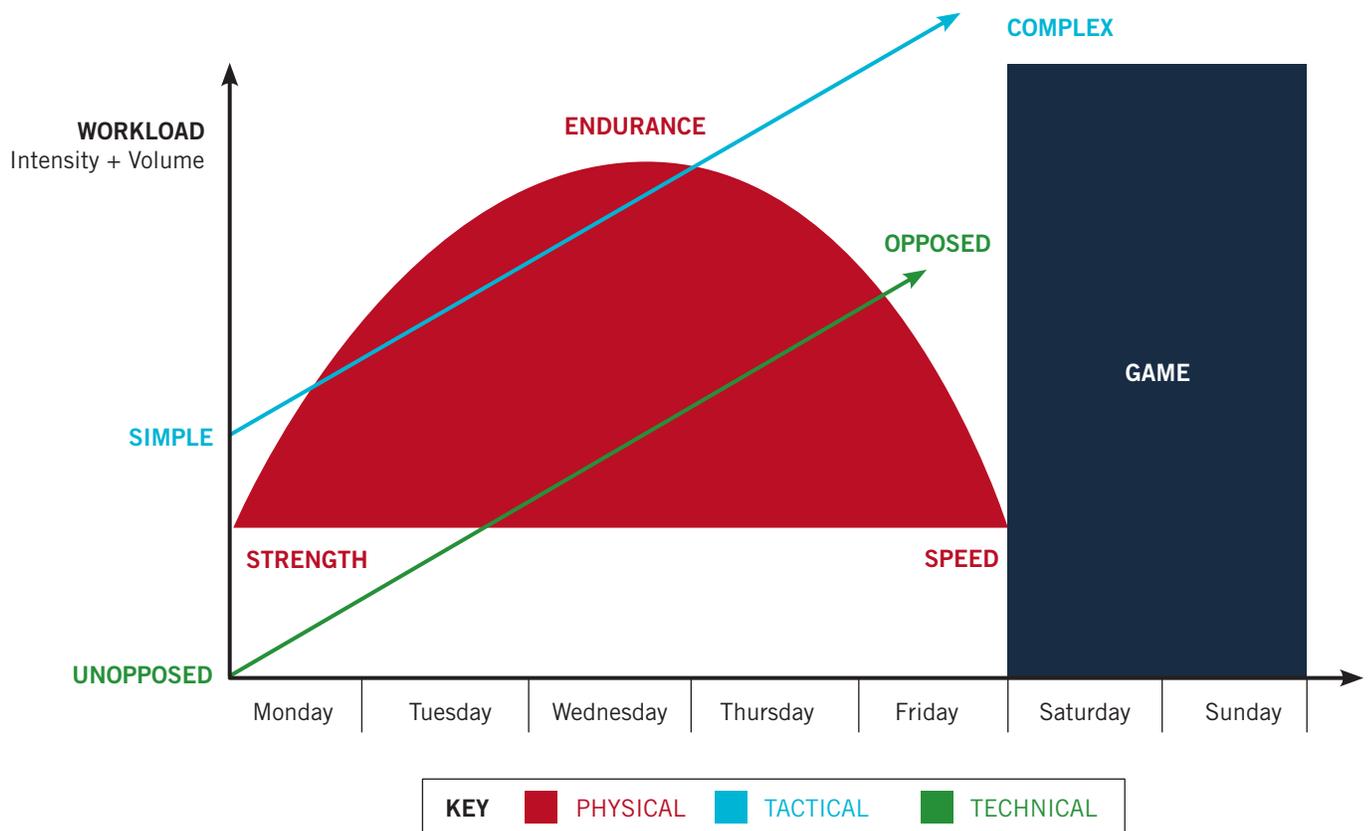
At the beginning of the week, the coach will use simple practices which increase in complexity throughout the week.

2. TECHNICAL

At the beginning of the week, the coach will use more unopposed practices focused on the quality of execution. By the end of the week, the coach will use opposed practices to increase speed, competitiveness and awareness.

3. PHYSICAL

At the beginning of the week, the physical work will focus on strength and injury prevention. By the middle of the week, the workload will increase using endurance training methods; and at the end of the week the training will focus on speed.



Examples of a weekly plan for the different stages

STAGE	TIME	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY
INITIAL U6 to U8	2 sessions 75 min		Warm-up Agility & basic motor skills Dribbling Scrimmage		Warm-up Agility & speed Passing & receiving Scrimmage		Game	
BASIC U9 to U12	3 sessions 90 min	Warm-up Agility & coordination Ball control Attacking principles Scrimmage		Warm-up Agility & speed Turning & shooting Possession Scrimmage	Warm-up Reaction & acceleration Passing & receiving Playing out from the back Scrimmage		Game	
INTERMEDIATE U13 to U14	4 sessions 90 min	Warm-up Coordination & flexibility Ball control Attacking principles Scrimmage	Warm-up Receiving to turn Aerobic capacity Possession Scrimmage		Warm-up Passing & receiving Aerobic power Transition Scrimmage	Warm-up Reaction & acceleration Shooting Finishing in the final third Scrimmage		Game
ADVANCED U15 to U18	4 sessions 120 min	Warm-up Turning Strength endurance Possession Scrimmage	Warm-up Receiving to turn Aerobic power Transition Scrimmage		Warm-up Passing & receiving Aerobic lactic Counter attacking Scrimmage	Warm-up Reaction & acceleration Shooting Zonal defending Scrimmage		Game

WORKLOAD KEY

1= VERY LOW

2= LOW

3= MID

4= HIGH

5= VERY HIGH



STRUCTURE OF THE TRAINING SESSION

For the initial, basic, intermediate and advanced stages

Sessions for all age groups cover tactical, technical, physical and psychosocial objectives. The exception to this are the sessions for players in the initial stage, which cover only technical, physical and psychosocial objectives because of the age and developmental characteristics of this group.

The session is organized into three blocks: Warm-up, main part (which includes technical, physical and tactical exercises) and scrimmage or free play. Training sessions follow the structure indicated below. However, the three parts of the session can be shorter or longer in duration and the sections within the main part can be interchanged depending on the type of exercise. Please note that any of the explanations below are recommendations and not prescriptions.

INITIAL STAGE U6-U8				
Sessions per week	2		Duration of the session	60 to 75 min
Players per session	12		Duration of the match	30 to 40 min
TRAINING SESSION STRUCTURE	WARM-UP (10 to 15 min)		Ball familiarity practices to develop basic skills	
	MAIN PART	Physical (15 min)	Exercises oriented mainly to develop speed, agility and basic motor skills	
		Technical simple (10 to 15 min)	Unopposed practices based on simplicity of the movements, repetition and high-tempo	
		Technical complex (10 to 15 min)	Unopposed or basic opposed practices with a small tactical component based on perception and/or decision-making	
	SCRIMMAGE (20-25 min)		Simple small-sided games to develop the team concept	

BASIC STAGE U9-U12				
Sessions per week	3		Duration of the session	90 min
Players per session	14		Duration of the match	50 to 60 min
TRAINING SESSION STRUCTURE	WARM-UP (10 min)		Fun & dynamic games, passing & possession practices, stretching & dynamic movement	
	MAIN PART	Physical (15 min)	Exercises based on agility, speed, coordination & balance	
		Technical (20 min)	Unopposed practices to develop quality and opposed practices to develop competitiveness. Opposed practices are more realistic and force players to make decisions as they would in the game	
		Tactical (15 min)	Practice games based on basic understanding of the game (attacking principles), possession, combination play, playing out from the back & finishing	
	SCRIMMAGE (25 min)		Games based on position specific, quick movement of the ball and distribution of space	



STRUCTURE OF THE TRAINING SESSION

For the initial, basic, intermediate and advanced stages

INTERMEDIATE STAGE U13-U14			
Sessions per week	3 or 4	Duration of the session	90 min
Players per session	16	Duration of the match	70 min
TRAINING SESSION STRUCTURE	WARM-UP (10 min)		Passing, possession & transition practices, stretching & dynamic movement
	MAIN PART	Technical (20 min)	Unopposed practices to develop speed of play and opposed practices to develop competitiveness. Opposed practices are more realistic and game oriented. Unopposed practices must have time restriction
		Physical (15 min)	Exercises based on agility, various types of speed (reaction, acceleration & acyclic speed), aerobic capacity & explosive strength
		Tactical (20 min)	Use the contrast of small spaces to develop speed of play and big spaces to develop the understanding of how to work in units
	SCRIMMAGE (25 min)		Free game based on speed of play, movement off the ball & quick defensive-offensive transition

ADVANCED STAGE U15-U18			
Sessions per week	4 or 5	Duration of the session	90-120 min
Players per session	18	Duration of the match	80-90 min
TRAINING SESSION STRUCTURE	WARM-UP (10 min)		Passing, possession & transition practices, stretching & dynamic movement
	MAIN PART	Technical (20-25 min)	At this stage technique can be developed in small spaces through collective games & simple opposed practices
		Physical (10-20 min)	Exercises based on agility, various types of speed (reaction, acceleration & acyclic speed), glycolytic power, aerobic power & explosive strength
		Tactical (20-30 min)	Use the full size or specific areas of the field to develop tactical understanding of the game. Keep it realistic and related to the game.
	SCRIMMAGE (25-30 min)		Free game including the concepts worked in the session

STRUCTURE OF THE TRAINING SESSION

Flexible components

Aspects that are flexible and help organize the practice:

SPACE	Keep the organization of the space simple. The initial set up, with small changes, should be maintained throughout the whole session. Resetting cones during a session can easily disturb the flow of training. Attention during the session should be focussed on making the coaching points.
TIME	Time is flexible. Let the practice flow and make the coaching points at the right time, using breaks to give feedback to the group.
INTENSITY	Use short periods of time at high-intensity and utilize resting periods to explain the practices or make coaching points.
RULES	Use different rules to adapt the practices to the characteristics of the players and make the exercises age-appropriate.
NUMBER OF PLAYERS	Practice should progress from smaller to bigger groups of players. Use support players to create superiority in numbers and to make the exercises easier for the attackers.