

## Focus of Far Post's Soccer Education Programs

The purpose of this flyer is to inform parents about the focus and approach that Far Post Soccer Club takes in our Soccer Education Programs. If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to contact Todd Kingsbury by email (todd@farpostsoccerclub.com).

The primary goals of our camps and education programs are to foster a 'love of the game' and 'mastering the ball.' The environment that we want is one in which kids are having fun playing the 'beautiful game.' We also understand that the primary focus for developing young soccer players is that they learn all the fundamental skills needed to control the ball. Without a strong technical base, there are no tactics or strategies. Technical development is paramount.

All of our Education Programs have a curriculum based on three main sections: small-sided games, creative and dynamic skills-building instruction and small group tactical games that require strong foot skills. Some of the main approaches to coaching that Far Post encourages are as follows:

**Encourage creativity and ball skills** – Far Post teach the fundament skills of the game. Training sessions must allow players to learn the basic techniques of soccer. Players are encouraged to practice these skills on their own outside the structured environment of the 'camp.' Young soccer players will only get better if they take the lessons learned in a camp, and practice these skills on their own every day. Our hope is that every player develops a 'love affair' with their soccer ball.

**Encourage players to play in unstructured environments** – In places where soccer is the primary sport, players "develop" in the streets or on the beaches. Players like Pele and Johan Cruyff "learned" the game on the beaches of Brazil or on the streets in Holland. Far Post encourages players to learn the game on their own. The game is the best teacher of the sport, AND we want kids to understand that soccer is a 'player's game.' Kids need to be allowed to play freely and develop their skills without the continual guidance of coaches and parents. With this in mind, we set up situations where the players can learn by playing the game.

**Be careful of over-coaching** – Coaches can often be more helpful to a young player's development by organizing less and saying less, and allowing players to do more. We aim to keep comments short, simple, and understandable. Far Post encourages players to figure out problems on their own. Coaches must be a facilitator in the process since we can't play the game for the kids. We must continually encourage young players to solve problems creatively and encourage them to "figure things out on their own." Far Post provides guidance and suggestions to help them through the process, but we don't want to answer the questions for them.

**Is winning important?** – Eventually, winning is important, but not until kids have developed the tools, both technically and emotionally, to allow them to be successful in an environment where the aim is to win. Particularly with the younger ages (9-12 year olds), the most fundamental tool in soccer is mastery of the ball and the creativity that comes with it. This cannot be encouraged enough. As skills are mastered, the rest of the game becomes easier.

**Don't expect games, practices and performances of young players to match that of professional soccer** – Far Post strongly encourage players to watch soccer at a higher level, but we don't expect them to replicate this immediately. We all need to remember that players don't reach their full soccer potential until they are in their late 20s. Development takes time, persistence and patience.

**Practices must replicate the game** – Far Post creates exercises and games that replicate and repeat the situations found in the game and that allow the player to grow comfortable and confident with the ball. The coaches

want to keep it simple and to have a progression to the training. We don't want to overload players with too many activities. We also practice the philosophy of "No Lines, No Laps and No Lectures." We want practices with creative games and activities that focus on the main qualities of the game: attacking, defending, dribbling, passing, dealing with teammates and opponents and scoring goals.

**Allow players to take more responsibility** – Far Post sets simple objectives and allows the players to use their own style and creativity to complete these objectives. We don't want to give them all of the answers. If the exercises allow the players to play soccer, then they will be able to get the clues on their own from the game. Our role is to set up clear and challenging learning objectives and then provide players with some guidance to help them figure out successful solutions using the game as the best teacher. The more players take responsibility and demonstrate creative ways to solve the tasks on their own without relying on the adults for answers, the better soccer players they will ultimately become.

**We are always learning too** – Our growth as coaches is similar to players. As coaches, we are always learning. We try to be creative and look to the game for the answers to questions. We are always reminding ourselves that the game is the best teacher. Far Post wants to allow players to learn by experiencing the game – sometimes succeeding and sometimes failing, but always learning, developing and growing. Far Post is there to monitor and facilitate the learning and development.

We are also there to provide an environment that is fun, enjoyable, challenging and safe.

Thank you!

<http://www.farpostsoccerclub.com/education-philosophy/>