Soccer

After completing this chapter, the reader should be able to:

- Appreciate the history and sociocultural values of the most popular sport in the world
- Understand the rules and spirit of the game
- Demonstrate proper technique associated with the fundamental skills of the game
- Understand the game's basic offensive and defensive principles
- Understand effective teaching progression involved with skill acquisition
- Demonstrate a thorough knowledge of soccer terminology

HISTORY

The roots of soccer are grounded in antiquity. Some believe that soccer's origins can be traced to the ancient (2500 BC) Chinese game of tsu-chu, or kickball. The Egyptians (2000 BC), Japanese (600 BC), ancient Greeks (Episkyros), and Romans (Harpastum) have also been intimately linked with the evolution and spread of the game. The Roman legions under Emperor Claudius (AD 43) are credited with carrying the game to Britain, where it was integrated into the local games and evolved, grew, and developed from the Middle Ages through the industrial revolution.

The modern form of soccer gained its renowned shape and identity in October 1863, in London's Freemason's Tavern, where the first football association (English Football Association) was established and the laws of the game were formulated. The laws served to separate association—"assoc" football (soccer)—and rugby. The kick-in was replaced by the throw-in (1863); offside (1866), corner kick (1872), and referees (1874) were added, as were the whistle (1878), the penalty kick (1891), and various numbers of substitutions. Thus, the modern game of soccer was off and running, and wherever England's ships gained port, soccer was soon to follow.

Contemporary soccer is truly an international game, with the Federation Internationale de Football Association (FIFA), established in 1904, representing approximately 200 nations. Soccer was introduced to the Olympic Games in Paris in 1900, and the inaugural World Cup was played in 1930 in Montevideo, where the Uruguayan hosts defeated Argentina. Since then, such luminaries as Pelé, Charlton, Cruyff, Beckenbauer, Maradona, Romanrio, Ronaldo, and Roberto Baggio have served to spread the passion for the game around the world.

The United States Soccer Federation (USSF), founded in 1913, serves as the governing body for most U.S. soccer interests. Since 1972, the USSF has offered coaching certification, as does the National Soccer Coaches Association. The United States Youth Soccer Association (USYSA), formed in 1974, is charged with the development and promotion of the game for those under age 19. Each of these affiliated organizations is attempting to build positive links to all communities by offering bilingual coaching courses, to promote not only the sport but also community solidarity. Today soccer is one of the most popular participatory sports for young boys and girls and has emerged as an intercollegiate favorite, with over 1,200 teams competing each year. The U.S. women's team captured the inaugural Women's World Cup in Beijing, China, in 1999, and in 1994 the United States opened its doors to the global soccer community to host the World Cup for the first time. It was won by the team from Brazil. The 1998 World Cup was won by France.

The impact of the United States' hosting the 1994 World Cup led to the emergence of the Major League Soccer (MLS), which initiated play in the summer of 1996.

In the 1996 Olympic Games in Atlanta, the United States women's team won the gold medal, and the men's team held its own with the rest of the world. Nigeria won the men's gold medal.

At the 2000 Olympic Games in Sydney, Australia, the men's team from Cameroon won the gold, Spain the silver, and Chile the bronze. On the women's side, Norway defeated the U.S. team for the gold, while Germany claimed the bronze.

In Athens, Greece, at the 2004 Olympics, Argentina defeated Paraguay for the gold medal and Italy won the bronze in men's soccer. In women's soccer, the United States defeated Brazil for the gold and Germany captured the bronze.

THE NATURE AND SPIRIT OF THE GAME

Soccer is the most popular sport in the world, and it is also one of the most demanding. Soccer's intricacies have been described as playing chess at 30 miles per hour—referring to its cardiovascular, cognitive, competitive, and psychomotor...
challenges. Soccer can be played in industrial and less developed nations, by young and old, by boys and girls, by elite and physically or mentally challenged, and on beaches or in massive stadiums. All that is needed is a ball and willing participants, and the spirit of the game (unwritten laws of fair play and honor).

THE GAME, BALL, AND PLAYERS

A soccer match is contested by two teams of 11 players each (with an appropriate number of substitutes), one of which is designated the goalkeeper. The object of the game is to score by propelling the 14- to 16-ounce (400- to 457-g) no. 5 ball (27 to 28 inches [69 to 71 cm] in circumference) completely across the goal line and within the confines of the 8 × 24 foot (2.44 × 7.32 m) goalposts and crossbar. The game is begun—after one team has won the coin toss and has elected to defend a goal—by a kickoff from the center of the field (the ball must move or be touched before it can be played by another player). The game is restarted in a similar fashion after each goal and at each half, or period. The duration of the game consists of two 45-minute halves and typically a 10- to 15-minute halftime break, after which the teams exchange ends. High schools and colleges have adopted an overtime procedure for those games ending in a tie score. The high schools play two 10-minute periods, while the colleges play two 15-minute periods. All phases and dimensions of the game may be modified to accommodate the individual needs of the participants. Examples of game durations, ball and field sizes, and age modifications are shown in Table 30.1.

Once play has been legally initiated, each team attempts to gain possession, and through planned and creative combinations of the fundamental skills (passing, shooting, heading, trapping, dribbling, tackling and marking, and goalkeeping) attempts to place the ball in the back of the opponent's net. It is hard to believe that these seemingly simple skills placed in a competitive environment have captured the hearts of hundreds of millions of players and spectators. Indeed, more people watched the 1994 World Cup than watched man take the first step on the moon!

FIELD OF PLAY

The field, sometimes referred to as a pitch, is rectangular, typically 120 × 70 yards (110 × 64 m) (Figure 30.1). International FIFA-sanctioned matches must be played on grass fields that are between a minimum of 110 × 70 yards (100 × 64 m) and a maximum of 120 × 80 yards (110 × 73 m). The field is bounded by lines no more than 5 inches (12.7 cm) in width running the length of the field (touchlines), as well as the field's two goal lines. The field is divided into two equal parts by a halfway line, upon which is centered a circle with a 10-yard (9.1-m) radius, where play is started at the beginning of each half or after a goal is scored. There is a penalty area at each end of the field that begins 18 yards (16.5 m) beyond each goalpost on the goal line and extends at right angles another 18 yards (16.5 m) into the field. The capstone line (44 yards [40.2 m]) enclosing the box designates where the goalkeeper can legally handle the ball, as well as the area where a penalty kick may be awarded. Within the penalty area is the penalty kick mark, located 12 yards (11 m) from the center of the goal line. The goal area is also found within the penalty box, extending 6 yards (5.5 m) from each goalpost and boxed in with a 20-yard (18.3-m) capstone line paralleling the goal mouth line. Goal kicks are taken within this rectangular area. At each corner of the field, an arc (quarter circle) with a radius of 1 yard (0.9 m) is drawn where corner flags at least 5 feet (1.5 m) high are placed and corner kicks are taken.

Table 30.1. GAME'S MODIFICATIONS FOR AGE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Player age</th>
<th>Game length</th>
<th>Overtime periods</th>
<th>Ball number and weight</th>
<th>Field size</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Adults</td>
<td>Two 45-minute halves</td>
<td>Two 15-minute halves</td>
<td>No. 5, 14–16 ounces (400–457 g)</td>
<td>90 × 50 yards (64 × 46 m)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Under 16</td>
<td>Two 40-minute halves</td>
<td>Two 15-minute halves</td>
<td>No. 4, 11–13 ounces (314–371 g)</td>
<td>70 × 35 yards (73 × 50.3 m)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Under 14</td>
<td>Two 35-minute halves</td>
<td>Two 10-minute halves</td>
<td>No. 3, 8–10 ounces (229–286 g)</td>
<td>70 × 35 yards (73 × 50.3 m)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Under 12</td>
<td>Two 30-minute halves</td>
<td>Two 10-minute halves</td>
<td>No. 3, 8–10 ounces (229–286 g)</td>
<td>70 × 35 yards (73 × 50.3 m)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Under 10</td>
<td>Two 25-minute halves</td>
<td>Two 10-minute halves</td>
<td>No. 3, 8–10 ounces (229–286 g)</td>
<td>70 × 35 yards (73 × 50.3 m)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Under 8</td>
<td>Two 25-minute halves</td>
<td>Two 5-minute halves</td>
<td>No. 3, 8–10 ounces (229–286 g)</td>
<td>70 × 35 yards (73 × 50.3 m)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The ball must be moved or be touched before it can be played by another player.
OALS

The goals, centered on each goal line, consist of two upright posts 8 feet (2.44 m) high and 24 feet (7.32 m) apart, joined at the top by a horizontal crossbar measuring 24 feet (7.32 m). Goalposts are typically made of wood, tubular metal, or plastic, not exceeding 5 inches (12.7 cm) in width or depth. Nets are made of hemp, jute, or nylon, and they should be tacked to the back of the crossbar and goalposts, extending behind the goal so as not to interfere with the play of the goalkeeper.

TECHNICAL AREA

The technical area (coaching box) can be helpful in the management of the game. A box is marked at least 5 feet (1.53 m) on each sideline and parallel to the touchline and extending 20 yards (18.29 m) in both directions from the halfway line. Coaches and players should remain inside the technical area, except when players are warming up in preparation to substitute, which typically occurs with permission of the referee at the halfway line of the field.

EQUIPMENT

Soccer is one of the most economical team sports played. The only requirements are a ball, appropriate footwear (flats or spikes), shin guards, mouthguard, athletic supporter (for males), shorts, shirt (in a different color for the goalkeeper), and socks, along with the field equipment consisting of goals, nets, corner flags, and a lining machine. Cones are also very useful for practice sessions and are a solid investment. Rings, jewelry, and glasses should be left at home or with a friend!
OFFICIALS

Soccer matches are presided over by a referee and two assistant referees. The center referee makes all final decisions regarding fouls and technical infringements. The proper signals to indicate these are illustrated in Figure 30.2. The two assistant referees run the touchlines (opposite sides and halves) and signal when a ball completely crosses the touchline (throw-in), goal line (goal kick or corner kick), or goal. They also may indicate fouls and offside infractions, usually by snapping their flags in the direction of the team that is to maintain ball control. In all cases, however, it is the referee who calls (whistles) or does not call the infraction and awards possession of the ball or goal. The assistant referees serve as "advisors" in this regard. The referee usually keeps the official time on the field, at least for the last several minutes of the game to allow for injury or extra time. The officials' objective is to allow play to be free-flowing and within the spirit of the game while maintaining optimal safety for the participating players.

OUT-OF-BOUNDS (RESTARTS)

Once the ball completely crosses (either in the air or rolling) the touchline or goal line or a violation is whistled, the referee will designate by hand signal the team that is to be awarded possession of the ball. Depending on the situation, any number of restarts may occur. Restarts can be direct (goal can be scored without touching another player) or indirect (ball must be touched by another player, even the opposition, before a goal is awarded). Direct restarts included the following:

Penalty Kick

A penalty kick is taken from the penalty kick, or 12-yard (10.97-m), mark. All players— with the exception of the penalty kicker and the goalkeeper— must be outside the penalty area and at least 10 yards (9.14 m) from the ball until the ball is struck forward. The goalkeeper may move on the goal line with his or her feet until the ball is kicked. The ball remains in play if it rebounds off the goalpost or the goalkeeper. The

![Figure 30.2. Official soccer signals.](image-url)
penalty kicker may legally play the ball again if it bounces off the goalkeeper; however, the penalty kicker may not play the rebound off the goalpost or crossbar until the ball has been touched by another player. A penalty kick is awarded when deliberate handling of the ball, holding, charging, tripping, pushing, or striking occurs inside the penalty area by the defending team. Any member of the offended team may take the penalty kick except a substitute brought in to take the penalty kick.

**Corner Kick**

When the ball crosses the defender's goal line and is last played by a defender, a corner kick is awarded from within the 1-yard (0.9-m) arc of the corner of the field (by the flag) closest to where the ball crossed the goal line. Players defending the corner kick must be 10 yards (9.14 m) from the corner kick arc when it is taken.

**Direct Kick**

Whenever any of the infractions cited in the "Penalty kick" or "Fouls and misconduct" sections occur, but are outside the penalty area or are committed by the offensive team in the defensive penalty area, then ball possession via a direct kick is awarded. The referee will signal the direct-kick violation by a tilting arm pointed in the attacking direction of the team that is to be awarded the ball. Defending players must always be 10 yards (9.14 m) from the ball before it is played, or a retake may be awarded.

Indirect restarts identified by the referee's straight, upraised arm signal include the following:

**Goal Kick**

When the ball crosses the defensive goal line and is last touched by the attacking side, the ball is awarded to the defending team. The goal kick is taken from the goal area and must clear the penalty area before being touched by either team. If such a violation occurs, the goal kick is retaken.

**Throw-In**

When the ball crosses completely over the touchline, a throw-in is awarded to the team that last touched the ball. A throw-in is a two-handed overhead movement that must be taken with both feet on the ground. An improper throw-in results in loss of possession and a throw-in for the opponent. If a throw-in fails to enter the field of play, the ball is awarded to the opposing team.

**Indirect Free Kick**

An indirect free kick is offered to the opposing team following a technical infraction, such as offsides, obstruction, dangerous play, or delay of game (see "Fouls and Misconduct" section). The indirect-kick restart is similar to that for the direct kick in that opposing players must be 10 yards (9.14 m) from the ball; however, another player must touch the ball before a goal can be awarded directly off a shot.

**Offsides**

A player is in an offsides position if he or she is nearer to the opponent's goal line than the ball at the moment the ball is played or passed by a member of his or her team unless:

1. The player is in his or her own half of the field.
2. There are two opponents (including the opposing goalkeeper) nearer to their own goal line than the attacking player.
3. The ball was last played by the attacker.
4. The attacking player receives the ball directly from a goal kick, corner kick, throw-in, or drop ball.
5. An offensive player even with the second-to-last defender is on-side (Figure 30.3).

**Drop Ball**

A drop ball is called for after the referee stops play due to an injury or emergency or when a call is unclear or in doubt. The ball is usually dropped in a nonthreatening or neutral territory and must hit the ground before being played. If the ball is played before hitting the ground (a violation), it is dropped again.

**FOULS AND MISCONDUCT**

When a player commits a foul or some other form of misconduct or illegal behavior, the opposing team is awarded a direct or indirect free kick. A direct free kick is awarded for intentionally fouling an opponent in any of the following ways (referred to as penal fouls):

- Kicking or attempting to kick an opponent
- Tripping
- Jumping at an opponent

![Figure 30.3. Offsides. Measure relative position by players' torsos, not their arms or legs. The torso of the attacking player must be no nearer the opponents' goal line than that of the second-last defender. It is not necessary to "see daylight" between them for one to be considered nearer than the other.](image-url)
• Charging in a violent or dangerous manner
• Striking or attempting to strike
• Holding
• Pushing
• Handling the ball (except by goalkeepers in their own penalty areas)
• Spitting at an opponent

If a defending player intentionally commits one of the penal offenses within his or her penalty area, a penalty kick is awarded from the 12-yard (10.97-m) mark to the opposing team.

Indirect free kicks are awarded to the opposing team when a player commits one of the following technical infractions:
• Playing in a dangerous manner, such as high kicking
• Charging with the shoulder when the ball is not within playing distance of the players involved (playing the opponent rather than the ball)
• Intentional impedance of an opponent when not playing the ball
• Charging the goalkeeper, except when the goalkeeper is holding the ball, is obstructing an opponent, or is outside the goal area
• When the goalkeeper has taken more than four steps without releasing the ball or has used tactics with the intention of delaying the game
• Offside

CAUTIONS AND GAME EXPULSIONS
When, in the judgment of the referee, a player is not playing within the laws and spirit of the game by committing any number of serious violations, the referee may issue to the player a caution, or yellow card. Any repeat offense (flagrant violation) shall result in ejection from the game. If the referee finds a player guilty of any of the following:
• Violent conduct or serious foul play
• Abusive language
• Persistent misconduct after receiving a yellow card a red card is awarded and immediate expulsion results. The player who is expelled may not be replaced, thus placing his or her team at a serious disadvantage.
• At the high school level, any player receiving a red card must sit out the next regularly scheduled game at the same level of competition. Also at the high school level, the National Federation Soccer Rules Committee has implemented a “soft” red card system. In this scenario, a player who receives a “soft” red card is still removed from the game, but he or she may be replaced so the player’s team does not have to play short a player. Players sent off with a “hard” red card cannot be replaced and the team must play short a player for the remainder of the game.

FUNDAMENTAL SKILLS AND TECHNIQUES
Soccer is a game of movement, speed, physical and mental control, space, timing, flow, creativity, improvisation, and imagination. To safely play and enjoy the game, the acquisition, practice, and mastery of certain basic fundamental skills are required.

Passing
Passing (Figure 30.4) is the foundation of the game. Most short passes are made with the inside of the foot (Figures 30.5, 30.6, and 30.7), although the outside of the foot, the “touch”
of a toe, and even the heel are often used during a match. Longer passes are either chipped, by placing the foot under the ball, or struck with force, while leaning the body backward to create the desired loft. During a match, the ball is passed to teammates at various angles, including a square pass made at a right angle to the attacker in the hope that the passer will continue the momentum and receive a return pass (wall pass, or give and go). The through pass is the most direct forward pass in the game because the ball is thrust behind the opponents into their defensive space as your teammate runs onto the ball. Of course, when thwarted or attempting to delay the game, or to create a planned opportunity, the ball can be passed backward, laterally, or “around,” including to your own goalkeeper, who in this case may not play the ball with his or her hands.

**Shooting**

Shooting is obviously a key element of soccer. The basic technique can be described as a powerful instep blast, although, like the pass, any surface of the foot or body can be employed. If the shot is struck forcefully with the right instep, the shooter’s right foot will also hit the ground first as full force, momentum, and low follow-through are enacted. The skill of shooting is very difficult, and it often seems that the potential scorer is “never in the right position.” Sometimes the ball is rolling, sometimes it is up in the air, and a volley shot (Figure 30.8) must be used; and sometimes the ball must be taken after a “quick bounce,” or half-volleyed.
The technique of shooting includes accuracy, deception, discipline, and optimal concentration; and practice in all game situations is paramount.

**Heading**

Heading is used by the player to pass or to shoot the ball. The proper technique for safe heading is crucial, and injury to the neck area should always be a consideration when warming up, teaching, and practicing the skill. The ball should be attacked by the header with the frontal bone of the forehead near the hairline and directed to a teammate or space that will permit a teammate to collect the ball or afford time to reorganize, especially in the defensive third of the field. Heading technique includes concentration, awareness of players around you, proper body posture and positioning, including the use of the arms as a protective shield, and keeping your eyes on the ball as it is directed.

**Trapping and Collecting**

Trapping and collecting the ball from a teammate’s pass or opponent’s miscue is the technique necessary for bringing the ball under complete control. Various parts of the body may be used, depending on the ball’s position upon arrival. The chest (Figure 30.9), thigh (Figure 30.10), and instep (Figure 30.11) are often employed to control the ball if it...
arrives in flight, while the sole of the foot, or the inside or outside of the foot trap, is often used for ground balls. The key to control is knowing and using your immediate space to gain possession of the ball. Another key to successful trapping and collecting is to utilize muscular control and bodily momentum-absorption techniques (give and take) to ease the ball into your control space. Concentration and knowing the opponents' whereabouts are mandatory so that the ball can be collected, protected, and distributed to a teammate.

**Dribbling**

Dribbling (Figure 30.12) is one of the most exciting and creative elements of the game and should be encouraged. Dribbling requires the player to use a series of soft touches, or pushes, as the ball is dribbled into appropriate space. Effective dribbling is done with both feet employing feints, or fakes; change of pace; and rapid, deceptive moves. Dribbling technique also requires proper body position because the ball often needs to be shielded, screened, and protected from a defender or marker (Figure 30.13). Dribbling can be used to advance the ball, move into position to get off a quick shot, delay the game, or to take the ball into open space. Dribbling is also a great warm-up and aerobic and anaerobic conditioner. All practices should include dribbling.
Tackling and Marking
Tackling (Figure 30.14) is a defensive technique that is designed to dispossess an opponent from the ball so that you or your teammate can gain ball possession. It involves marking (Figure 30.15), or playing the opponent with the ball until the optimal time (usually just after the opponent has touched the ball) to make your tackling move. Tackling is usually accomplished by blocking, poking, or sliding in a calculated effort to win the ball. It requires sound judgment, assertive play, mental toughness, and teamwork.

Goalkeeping
The goalkeeper, or goalie, is unique in that he or she may legally use the hands (the W position, connecting the two thumbs for high balls, and palms open, fingers down for low shots) to stop, control, and catch a ball within the penalty area if it is not intentionally passed to him or her by a teammate (Figure 30.16). Upon collection of the ball (Figure 30.17), the goalie is also permitted to clear the ball or initiate "instant offense" by throwing (distributing), drop-kicking, or punting the ball. Defensively, the goalkeeper must know when and how to challenge, come off the line, and cut down the attacker's angle and effectively smother and deflect shots. Often sound judgment, common sense, and coolness under pressure (mental ability) are as important as physical skill when selecting a solid goalkeeper (Figure 30.18).
A system, or style, of play (Figure 30.19) describes the organization and configuration of the players on the field, as well as their responsibilities within the team structure. The beauty of soccer is that it is fluid, spontaneous, and constantly changing pace and configuration. Current systems of play have evolved from the original English 2–3–5 offensive set of the early 1990s to the Arsenal Football Club's 3–2–5 WU system of the 1930s, from the famous Brazilian World Cup 4–2–4 formation to Italy's more defense-minded Catennaccio, or 5–4–1, system to “total futbol,” where total interchangeability is the optimal objective and weapon.

Regardless of the system of play, numbering begins from the defensive posture and works its way through the midfield to the most forward players. It is interesting to note that all the great systems of play had players like Pele, Cruyff, and Beckenbauer to carry them to prominence. Typically, the team’s players and the skill and style of the opponent determine how a coach chooses to implement a particular style of play.

**OFFENSIVE AND DEFENSIVE PRINCIPLES**

The basic principles of soccer appear to be simple, but they take a great deal of practice, communication (verbal and nonverbal), discipline, and dedication. One primary principle often overlooked is that when your team is in possession of the ball, everyone attacks; and when the ball is lost, everyone becomes a defender.

**Attacking Principles (Moving, Support, Penetration, Finishing)**

Ball possession dictates who is the attacker and who is the defender. A good attacking player must be able to move without the ball, not only to create space, but also to receive a pass from a teammate. These moves, or runs, often take the form of near- and far-post runs, corner-flag runs, and runs away and off the ball, as well as overlapping runs, where a player, usually from the midfield position, runs forward past the ball being held by a teammate and into open space behind the defense. The pass is then fed to the penetrating overlapper, who collects the ball and goes to the goal.

Also critical to the team and the player who possesses the ball is support from teammates (at least two should always be 10 to 15 yards from the teammate with the ball). With proper support (depth and width) and communication, combination play, such as wall passing and “give and goes,” can be initiated and space can be created and exploited for penetration (via passing and dribbling) behind the defense. After the defense has been penetrated and a scoring opportunity has been created (usually by improvising a combination of runs, passing, and dribbling), the principle of finishing, or scoring, must be effectively applied. Shooting is the only way to score, and functional practice makes perfect.
Defensive Principles (Chase, Delay, Support, Balance and Concentration, Challenge, Counterattack)

Defense is soccer's great equalizer. A team well schooled in defensive principles and sound judgment should have a chance to be competitive in every match. Defense begins as soon as the ball is lost to the opposition. Immediate chase and pressure should be applied to the player who has taken control of the ball. The objective is to delay the player with the ball and force him or her to the nearest touchline, thereby preventing a quick penetration toward the goal. This delay permits the defense time to retreat, organize (find, mark, track), or regroup to support the defender playing the ball. This support involves balance, depth, and cover in order to restrict the amount of space that the opponent has to exploit. This is especially crucial in the defensive third of the field, where the defensive team must concentrate to force the attacking team to its least desirable offensive options (usually away from the center of the field, where the shooting angle is most favorable).

Once proper defensive support and cover are implemented, the defender playing the ball can challenge, or tackle, the ball. Often the ball is won by the cover person after the ball is challenged by the primary defender. When the ball is won, a counterattack (quick offensive penetration) or more deliberate offensive buildup is constructed, depending on where the ball is won. Thus, the game of soccer is a 90-minute, continuous series of attacks, defensive destroys or offensive breakdowns, counterattacks, combination passing and buildups, and creativity.

TEACHING CONSIDERATIONS

Teaching the game of soccer should be an enjoyable and positive experience for all. It is important to note that teaching/coaching responsibilities first and foremost include the health and safety of the players, so a thorough medical examination should be required and placed on record and the instructor should possess first-aid and CPR certification. All involved should be made aware “in print” of the emergency procedures.
skills, confidence, and individual and team self-worth must be integrated into all practice sessions. Fun, mastery of the ever-changing game environment (opposition, pace, flow, playing the ball with the head), and the particular goals to be accomplished daily or long range. A sample hour-long table of specifications looks like the following:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Warm-up</th>
<th>7 to 10 minutes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Functional fitness</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aerobic endurance (circuit-training course)</td>
<td>7 to 10 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anaerobic (speed)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strength (power)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individual skill instruction and evaluation</td>
<td>5 to 10 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Small sided games</td>
<td>5 to 10 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tactical considerations and economical training</td>
<td>5 to 10 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scrimmage (small grid, half or full field)</td>
<td>5 to 10 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cool down (static stretching)</td>
<td>5 minutes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

INSTRUCTIONAL STRATEGIES

It is important that each player master both the skills and the tactics (strategy) of the game. The skills should be introduced with varying degrees of time, space, pace, rest, and opposition being progressively adapted and manipulated in the following order:

- Individual instruction (foundational stage)
- Individual feedback and mastery
- Individual versus single opponent (1v1, 2v1, 3v1, passive resistance)
- Small groups (2v1, 2v5, 2v3, at progressively faster rates)
- Small sided related games (6v4, 5v4)
- Small grid, half- or full-field game conditions (7v7 or 8v8 continuous pressure and opposition)

At all phases of the progressive instructional plan, players should receive concise hands-on instruction, positive feedback, and accurate evaluation. Although soccer skills are individually taught, they must eventually be placed into the ever-changing game environment (opposition, pace, flow, timing), and these often neglected concepts must be effectively integrated into all practice sessions. Fun, mastery of skills, confidence, and individual and team self-worth must also be emphasized at every practice. The teaching of soccer is an ongoing process, and there is nothing more rewarding than watching a player develop in all phases of the game and become part of the most popular sport in the world.

GLOSSARY

attacking team The team that possesses the ball.
banana shot A shot or pass that curves.
blocking Tackle using the inside of the foot to block the ball from an opponent who is dribbling.
center A pass made by a wing player from the outside to the center of the field.
charge Body contact between two opponents that may be judged legal or illegal depending on the intent to play the ball.
chip To lift or lob the ball into the air and over another player.
clear To send the ball by foot or head away from the goal.
collecting A technique of receiving and gaining control of the ball.
CONCACF Confederation of North American and Caribbean Association Football, of which the United States is a member and must win the CONCACF title to gain a World Cup berth.
corner kick A restart after the ball crosses the opponent's goal line when last touched by the opponent.
cover To provide defensive support for teammates, especially when marking or tackling.
cross To kick the ball from the wings (outside) toward the goal area or to a teammate cross-field.
defending team The team that is trying to gain possession of the ball.
defensive concentration The defending team overloads the middle of the field, usually in the defensive third of the field.
depth Proper support of teammates on attack or defense.
diagonal run A run designed to penetrate the defense while drawing defenders from the middle of the field.
direct free kick A free kick from which a goal may be scored directly.
dribbling A succession of forward pushes or touches in which the player keeps the ball under control.
drop ball Ball held waist high and dropped by a referee.
drop kick A ball that is dropped on the ground by the goalie and kicked just after it bounces.
economical training Practice sessions involving at least two of the four components of the game: fitness, technique, tactics, psychology.
far post Goalpost farthest from the ball and the target of attacking runs.
functional training Repeated skill work under matchlike conditions.
goal area The rectangular area in front of the goal line (6 yards out—5.47 m) where the ball is placed for a goal kick.
grids The use of confined space for practice and small sided games.
half-volley Contacting the ball just as it contacts the ground after being airborne.
heading Playing the ball with the head.
holding Impeding the progress of a player by placing the hand or extended arm in contact with the player.
impedance The illegal use of the body to prevent an opponent from getting to the ball.

indirect free kick A free kick from which a goal cannot be scored unless touched by another player.

kickoff The free kick that starts play at the beginning of the game, each half and after each score. A goal may be scored directly from the kickoff.

man-on Popular term used to signal a teammate that defensive pressure is approaching, suggesting an immediate touch or pass to a teammate.

mark To stay close to an opponent for defensive purposes.

offsides Usually a player who does not have two defensive players between him or her and the goal when receiving the ball from a teammate.

own goal A goal scored by the defending team.

penalty area The large rectangular area in front of the goal that defines the area the goalkeeper can use to hit or his hands to play the ball, and the area in which a penalty foul by the defense results in a penalty kicks for the offense.

poke tackle Use of the defender’s toe to push the ball away from an attacker.

restart The starting of play whenever the ball is out of play or the game is stopped. Also referred to as “dead ball.”

shielding When the dribbler stays between the ball and the marking opponent.

square pass A pass played laterally to a teammate or space.

stopper The central defender located in front of the sweeper.

striker The most forward attacking player(s).

sweeper The last defender.

tackle The act of taking the ball away from an opposing player.

target player Usually a striker, who receives the ball a large share of the time.

through pass A pass that goes between and past defenders.

throw-in To put the ball in play from the touchline by a two-hand throw.

touchline Side boundary of the field.

trapping A technique used to gain possession and control of the ball. Usually accomplished by the sole of the foot, thigh, or chest.

volley Meeting the ball in the air with some part of the body and directing it to a teammate or on goal.

tactical Wall Defensive tactic in which several players line up 10 yards (9.14 m) from a direct or indirect kick in the defensive third of the field.

width Attacking team’s attempt to spread the defense in the attacking third of the field.

SUGGESTED READINGS


Rees, R. 2003. *Coaching soccer successfully*. 2nd ed. Champaign, IL: Human Kinetics. Discusses the factors that must be considered to build and maintain a winning soccer program.


RESOURCES

Videos

*Soccer on video*. Soccer Learning Systems, San Ramon, California 94583.