ABILITY BASED COACHING

WHY WE SHOULD GROUP CHILDREN FROM 4 YEARS OLD BY ABILITY

PRESENTED BY DAVID NEWBERY
AGENDA
Presenter
PD Approach
Defining ability grouping
Why negativity?
The Facts
Why not soccer?
Wait a minute …
Research
Adherence
Positive growth for all
Coaches are worth it
Seamless transition
Common objections
10 tips to implement
Questions

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David Newbery
Director of Player & Coach Development,
Soccer Plus
PLATE DEVELOPMENT APPROACH

**COACHING**
- In house coaching education
- Coaching certification
- Coach mentoring & support
- Planning & Performance

**EDUCATION FRAMEWORK**
- Curriculum
- Stages of development & player pathway
- Replicable systems & processes
- Establish standards of performance

**CONTENT & METHODOLOGY**
- Competency based programming
- Planning for development
- Coaching tools – activities, sessions, books
- Positive & challenging learning environment

**PLAYER, COACH & EDUCATION ASSESSMENT**
DEFINING ABILITY GROUPING

- Segmenting players based on perceived capability
- Usually determined by a performance assessment

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ABILITY GROUPING CAN BE:

1. **Within** a team or group
2. **Within** an age group or school grade
3. **Between** age groups or school grades.

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POLL QUESTION

RAISE YOUR HAND IF YOU BELIEVE IN THE BENEFITS OF ABILITY BASED GROUPING
POLL QUESTION

KEEP YOUR HAND UP IF YOUR ORGANIZATION ADOPTS ABILITY BASED GROUPING
WHAT IS US YOUTH SOCCER’S POSITION?

“It is healthy and appropriate to group players according to ability level, but movement between groups should be open and fluid in order to reflect changes in ability and individual development from year to year or every six months.”

Best Practices for coaching
WHY SUCH NEGATIVITY?

1. Education
2. Previous experience
3. Fear of unknown
4. Concern over parent reaction
5. Good is the evil of great
FACT #1

Grouping players based on ability within a team produces larger improvements in performance than mixed ability grouping.

The benefits are slightly better for low-achieving players than for mid or high performers.
FACT #2

Grouping players based on ability *within and between* a year/school grade leads to significantly greater improvements in performance than mixed ability groups.

*At all levels (High, Mid and Low) of achievement.*
FACT #3

There are no significant differences in performance when High, Mid and Low ability groups use the same content.
FACT #4

When the curricula is differentiated to meet the achievement levels of the ability groups, the effects are consistently positive.
WHY NOT SOCCER?

PRE-SCHOOL SWIMMING LESSONS

Ages 3 – 5
The pre-school swim lesson program provides children with an opportunity to learn skills at his/her own pace. Children are not forced to do any skill, but encouraged to try when they are ready. **All classes are taught without bubbles.** Various instructional floatation devices will be used during each class.

PIKE

Ages 3 – 5
This class is the first class for children without parent/adults in the pool. This class is designed for the beginner pre-schooler.
WHY NOT SOCCER?

ADVANCED PIKE

Ages 3 – 5
This is the ideal level for the returning Pike who is comfortable with a floatation device, and back floating, but who can not yet independently swim without help.

EELS

Ages 3 – 5
For those children who can swim 1/4 width of the pool without an instructional flotation device.

RAY

Ages 3 – 5
This class is designed for children who can swim 1 width of the pool on their front and back unassisted in deep water.
WHY NOT SOCCER?
POLL QUESTION

RAISE YOUR HAND IF YOU BELIEVE SOCCER SHOULD BE TAUGHT AS AN INDIVIDUAL SPORT BETWEEN THE AGES OF 3-12!
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... wait a minute! We do use ability grouping in soccer!

• Prevalent in competitive soccer
• Tryouts used to answer one thing ... are you good enough to play travel soccer
SOCCERPLUS RESEARCH

• Fall 2011 – 2 programs
• 120 players
• Both programs volunteer coached with professional oversight
• 2 data points – pre and post season

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SOCCERPLUS RESEARCH

SoccerPlus Juniors – 3-8 years
• 30% improvement (wk 1 to 10)
• Similar % for low, mid and hi
Recreation program – 5-16 years
• 4% improvement (wk 1 to 10)
• Higher ability players accounted for the improvement
WHAT WILL BE THE COMPOUND EFFECT OVER THE NEXT 3-5 YEARS ON CHILDREN IN BOTH PROGRAMS IF THIS TREND WAS TO CONTINUE?
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ATTRITION</th>
<th>4 &amp; 5 YEARS</th>
<th>6 YEARS</th>
<th>7 YEARS</th>
<th>8 YEARS</th>
<th>9 YEARS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0%</td>
<td>ORGANIZED BY AGE GROUP</td>
<td>ORGANIZED BY ABILITY</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5-10%</td>
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<td>20-25%</td>
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<td>30-35%</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>45-50%</td>
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POSITIVE GROWTH FOR ALL

Typical mixed ability model:
1. Early developers (A) touch the ball 2-3 times more than B&C
2. ‘A’ pass the ball to equally gifted players
3. ‘A’ more likely to continue playing beyond 4th grade.
4. Late developers have little chance!
OUR COACHES ARE WORTH IT!

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SEAMLESS TRANSITION BETWEEN REC & COMPETITIVE & MANAGES EXPECTATIONS

THE PLAYER DEVELOPMENT CONTINUUM

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PLUS 1</th>
<th>PLUS 2</th>
<th>PLUS 3</th>
<th>PLUS 4</th>
<th>PLUS 5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3 to 5 years</td>
<td>6 to 8 years</td>
<td>9 to 11 years</td>
<td>12 to 14 years</td>
<td>15 to 18 years</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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COMMON OBJECTIONS

1. Ability grouping benefits the high ability players

2. Players placed in the mid to low ability groups are more likely to leave the sport.

3. Results of the initial ability assessment are not a true reflection of performance & some players are misplaced.
4. Once assigned to a mid to low ability group, the player is condemned and remains indefinitely in that group.

5. Most experienced coaches work with the mid-high ability players & there is an inequitable distribution of coaching talent.
6. *Players want to be with their friends*

7. *Soccer is a team sport*

8. *Experience from team tryouts (9-11 years) suggest young players have problems coping with rejection to B, C and D.*

9. *Our program does not support ‘playing up’ an age group.*
10 TIPS TO IMPLEMENT ABILITY BASED COACHING

1. Movement between ability groups for players should be easy and seamless.
2. Well designed and transparent assessment process
3. Parent education imperative
4. Leadership on and off field must be clearly evident
5. Equitable distribution of coaching talent
10 TIPS TO IMPLEMENT ABILITY BASED COACHING

6. Phased approach
7. Start with the youngest players
8. Provide written feedback
9. Communicate group changes to parents prior to session.
10. Establish broad commitment from the Board & Administration
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PLAYER, COACH & EDUCATION ASSESSMENT
POLL QUESTION

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POLL QUESTION

KEEP YOUR HAND **UP** IF YOU WILL
BE TAKING THE ABILITY BASED
GROUPING MESSAGE BACK TO
YOUR ORGANIZATION.
NSCAA CLUB STANDARDS PROJECT 2012

“We believe developing ‘National Standards’ will be a key to the health and longevity of soccer in the next 10 years, enabling youth organizations the opportunity to draw on expertise and good practice from around the country”
QUESTIONS

www.PlayerDevelopmentRevolution.org