

The Role of Play in Player Development

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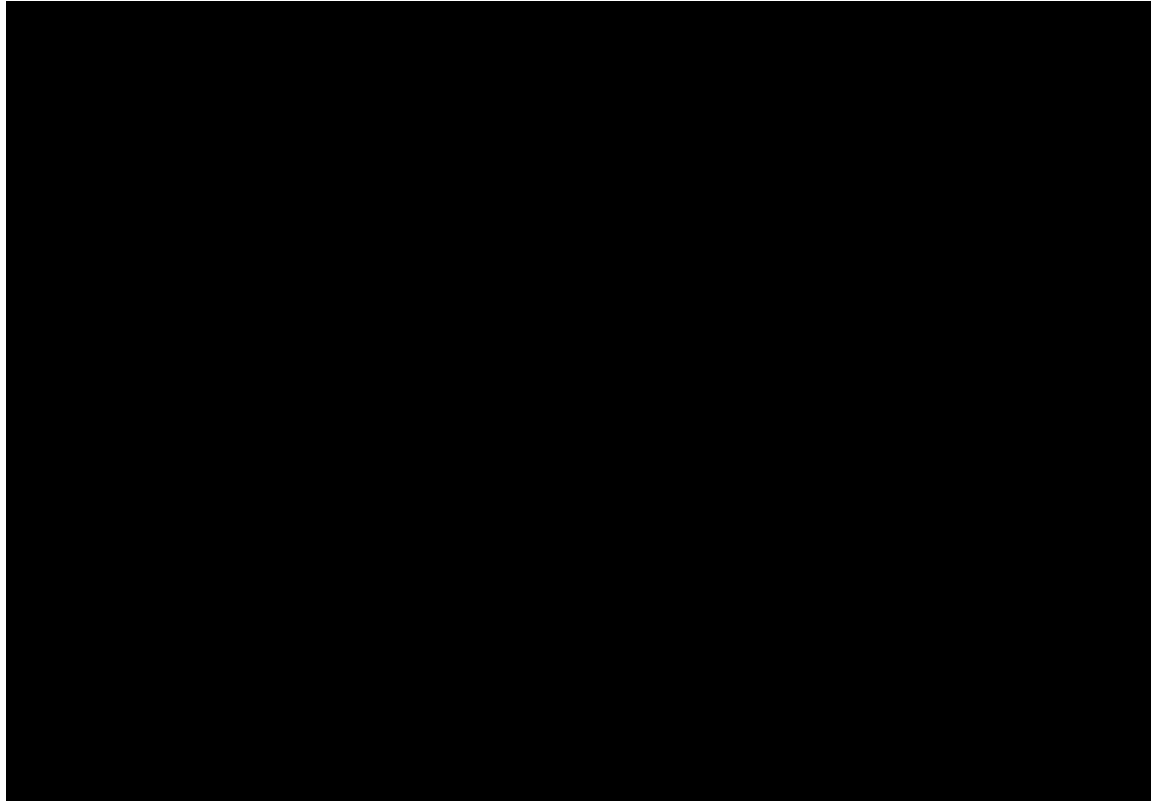


US YOUTH SOCCER WORKSHOP
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What is your environment like?



Your Initial Thoughts?

When you think of “play”, what comes to mind?



Objectives for today

- Develop basic understanding of play and its connection to player development
- Provide examples of why research supports play in development
- Create practical examples
- Provide resources to further understanding



Definitions

- **Play**: voluntary activity engaged in for enjoyment and recreation, esp. by children
- **Player**: a person taking part in a sport or game; a person or body that is involved and influential in an area or activity
- **Development**: the process of developing or being developed; a specified state of growth or advancement

Player Development

- “True player development occurs when each player's daily training and playing environment is of the highest quality. If this environment is consistent, with a clear vision of what lies ahead for the players, development is maximized. To this end a club must have a business plan for staff growth, facilities management and implementation of programming within the club. A club must build, maintain and expand its facilities as one element of the formula to meet this obligation. The club must also provide for the ongoing education of the administrators, coaches, parents and referees, who are the four pillars supporting youth soccer. The core for planned development is a sound curriculum.”

Sam Snow, Technical Director, US Youth Soccer

How do we know this works?

- Educationally supported
- Jean Piaget Stages of Cognitive Development

Sensorimotor (0-2yrs), Preoperational (2-7yrs), Concrete Operational stage (7-11yrs), Formal Operational stage (11 + yrs)

Schemas / Assimilation / Accommodation / Equilibration

- Erik Erikson's psychosocial development theory: Ego Identity through play / Interaction with others / Culture

What is Play?

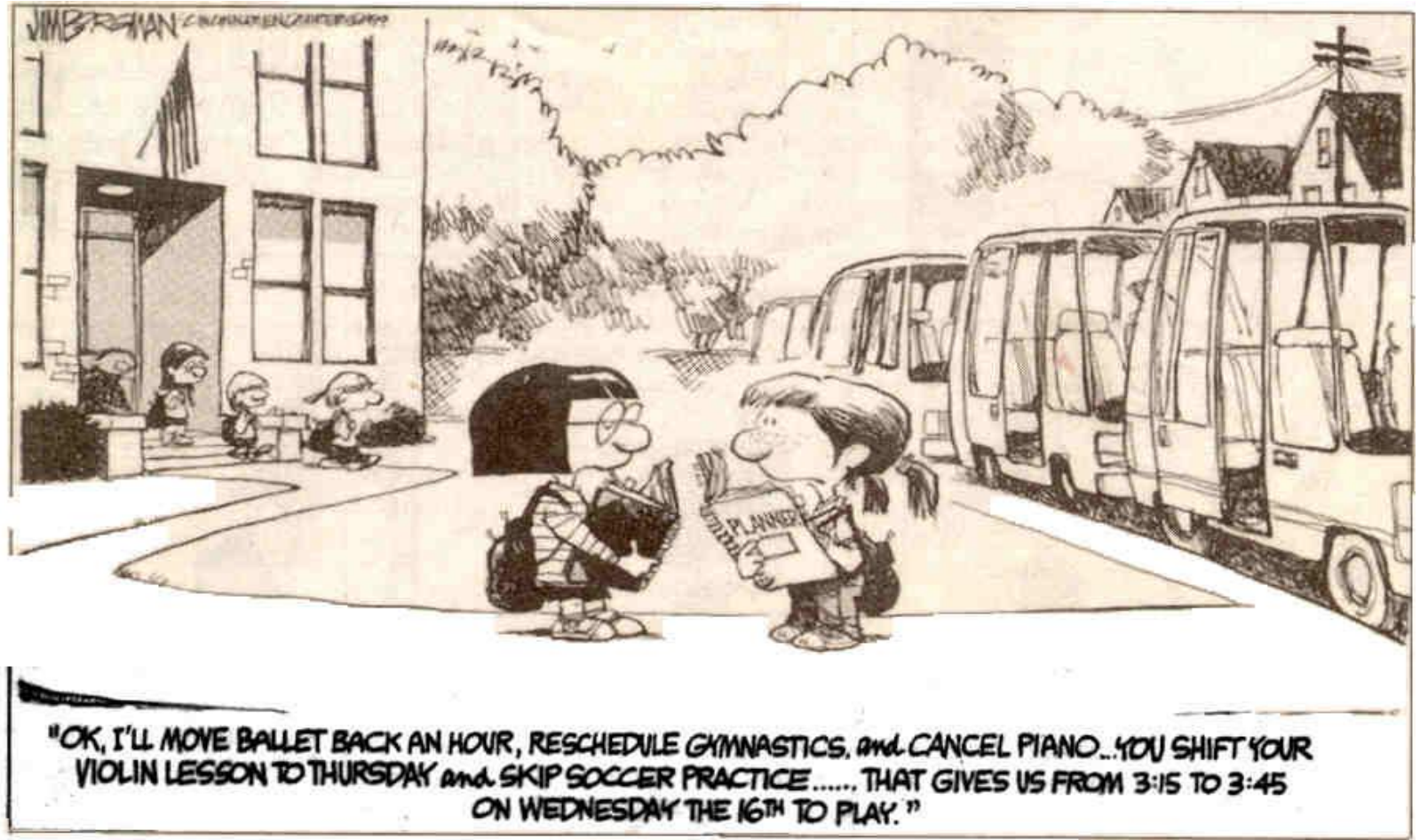
- Unstructured Play: Generally not monitored. Street soccer, backyard, playground, etc
- Structured Play: Monitored activities that relate in some way to the game of soccer (Large numbers or SSG) and or are connected in some way to movement education.

Breaking down further

- Dr. Jean Cote, Psychology of Sport

<u>Dimensions</u>	Free Play	Deliberate Play	Structured Practice	Deliberate Practice
<u>Goal</u>	Fun	Fun	Improve Performance	Improve Performance
<u>Monitored</u>	Not Monitored	Loosely Monitored	Monitored	Carefully Monitored
<u>Correction</u>	No Correction	No focus on immediate correction	Focus on correction, often by discovery	Focus on immediate correction
<u>Gratification</u>	Immediate	Immediate	Immediate & Delayed	Delayed
<u>Sources of Enjoyment</u>	Inherent	Predominately Inherent	Predominately Inherent	Extrinsic

Free time?



Why is “Play” practically important?

- Provides enjoyment / FUN! = Retention
- Social interaction with peers (adapting)
- Central ingredient to learning
- Allows players to imitate adult behaviors, practice motor skills, process emotional events
- Competition (Intrinsic / Extrinsic)
- Encourages improvisation (creativity)
- SSG provide more chances to touch the ball (ball mastery), score, make decisions related to the game
- Increases a players physical development (flexibility, coordination, speed, power, endurance, agility, etc

What is the big picture for Soccer?

- Drawing a comparison!
- Playing in a band.



How do we Play in a structured environment?

- Activities need to be specific to the cognitive and physical developmental abilities of the age group (age appropriate).
- Activities should keep all players engaged
- The play can involve correction or guidance (coaching)
- **NO LINES, NO LAPS, NO LECTURES**

Long term & Short term application

- Development comes from increasing the players opportunities to manipulate the ball and face critical game like decisions through active play with peers.
- Short and Long term development is highest when those “play” activities are systematically introduced to the players.

Practical Examples ?



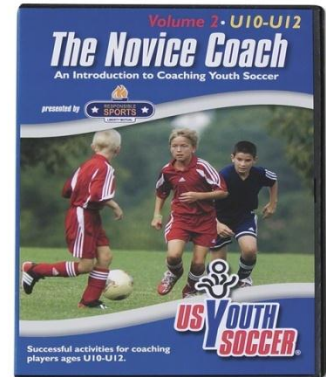
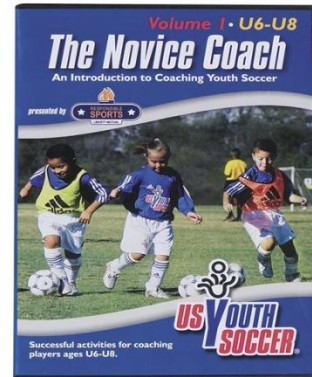
- What country seems to be having the most success at the highest level?

Final Thoughts

- Play is critical to overall player development!
- Play can keep players passionate about soccer
- Keep it fun! Fun equals retention. Retention allows for long term development
- Encourage players to be active with the game outside of the structured environment (i.e. street soccer)

Resources

- US Youth Soccer website
www.usyouthsoccer.org
- Youth modules (U6/U8 & U10/U12)
- National Youth License
- Videos
- USSF License Courses
- State Association Website



Questions



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