

# SAP (U9-U12) Coaching Guide: Training and Matchday



FOOTBALL  
DEVELOPMENT

## ABOUT THE SKILL ACQUISITION PHASE

The foundation of the Skill Acquisition Phase is built upon:

- The coach focusing extensively on providing a solid foundation of technical skill
- At this age the children are ready for a more structured approach to training
- In every session the focus is on one of the core skills, from the beginning until the end of the session (“theme based sessions”).
- The emphasis in the Skill Acquisition Phase is on Skill Development but this should not be separated from developing insight/game understanding at the

## THE GAME-INTERVENTION-GAME (GIG) FRAMEWORK

(a way to run your training session)

### FUNCTIONAL ACTIVITY

(10-15 mins)

This is a **FUN activity** with lots of **football specific movements** in the first 5-10 minutes of the practical session with **all players involved** and the focus on **developing fundamental movement actions at high speed**. FUNctional Activities may include: games, circuits or juggling tasks that are FUN and linked to the core skill.

### RECOGNITION PHASE: GAME

(10-15 mins)

A game complying with the rules of the real game and free of any specific conditions for the first five minutes to encourage players to showcase freedom of expression. After the first five minutes, the coach can introduce a **scoring system** as an incentive to bring about **desired actions** (without restricting freedom of expression)

### INTERVENTION: SKILL BREAKDOWN

(10-15 mins)

Opportunity to develop or refine **technical competence** with the core skills broken down in practice activities that closely **resemble the conditions of the real game**. Demonstrations by the coach or model player are encouraged to support learning functional technical skills.

### EVALUATION PHASE: GAME

(10-15 mins)

A game complying with the rules of the real game and **free of any specific conditions** or incentives to measure rate of learning and understanding. It is also advisable to ‘wrap-up’ the session at the end, summarising the main points of the session.

## TRAINING TIP: THE “GOOD” PRINCIPLE

(aspects to consider in your session; is it a GOOD session?)

Acronym	Principle	Checklist
<b>G</b>	<b>Goals</b>	<b>Are there goals (or objectives) in the game?</b>
<b>O</b>	<b>Opponent</b>	<b>Are there opponents in the game?</b>
<b>O</b>	<b>Opportunities</b>	<b>Do the activities enable everyone to experience success?</b>
<b>D</b>	<b>Directional</b>	<b>Is the game directional?</b>

## TRAINING TIP: CHANGEIT

(if players are enjoying and engaging with the game, let them play! If not, **CHANGEIT**)

<b>C</b>	<b>Coaching Style:</b> Coach on the run without stopping the game; provide feedback during break of play or drink break; use players as role models
<b>H</b>	<b>How You Score/ Win:</b> Increase opportunities to score and provide incentive for both attackers and defenders to increase competitiveness
<b>A</b>	<b>Area:</b> Increase or decrease the game challenges by changing the size/ shape of the playing area
<b>N</b>	<b>Numbers:</b> use different team numbers to help achieve your session objective (e.g., have less defenders in attacking-focused activity)
<b>G</b>	<b>Game Rules:</b> change the rules slightly (e.g., if a different player scores the next goal for their team, it is worth 3 points)
<b>E</b>	<b>Equipment:</b> for example, bigger goals, smaller goals or more goals
<b>I</b>	<b>Inclusion:</b> Engage players in modifying the practices; provide opportunities for all players to experience FUN and success
<b>T</b>	<b>Time:</b> Reduce or extend the time to perform actions; (e.g., team must score within 10 seconds)

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## TRAINING AND MATCHDAY TIPS

(aspects to consider at each phase of training and matchday)

### Pre-Practice/ Match:

- Arrive early to set up your activities and games
- Greet every player with a smile and acknowledge each one by name; your attitude will reflect in the players, so it is important to keep positive!
- As each player arrives, get them organised into a small-sided game
- Create a culture where you communicate with parents in a positive way

### During Practice/ Match:

- Create an environment that encourages players to freely express themselves
- Praise effort, not ability
- Encourage players to improvise and be creative with ball at their feet
- Model good sportsmanship-like behaviour

### Post-Practice/ Match:

- Develop a habit to get players to support you in packing up
- Create a culture where players show gratitude towards opponents, referees
- Farewell every player with a positive comment about their effort and attitude
- Encourage each player to practice a FUN home skill (e.g., juggling, dribbling)



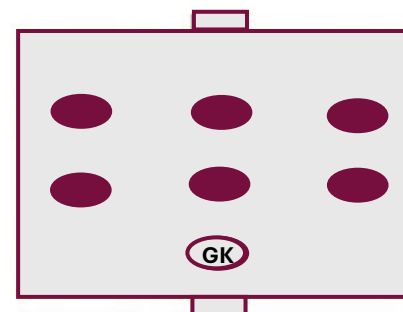
QR CODE: link to Football Australia's Skills Hub which includes a number of ideas on at-home practices players can complete based on the four core skills

Challenges need to be tailored to each player's abilities

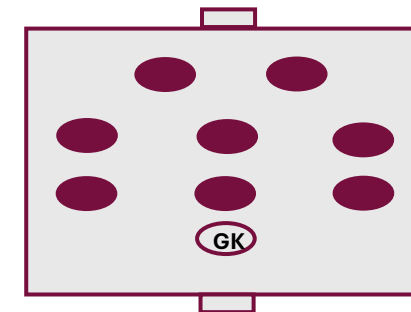
## MATCHDAY TEAM TIPS

(what shape might you use for team line up?)

U9: 7 vs 7 (1-3-3)



U10 – U12: 9 vs 9 (1-3-3-2)



## DO'S AND DON'TS

### Do's:

- Welcome all families and encourage parental involvement where appropriate
- Get to know your players and their parents, their needs and wants
- Keep players excited about the session/ game and playing football
- Use simple and appropriate child-friendly language supported with clear demonstrations/ instructions
- Ensure all players are equally valued regardless of gender, ethnicity or ability

### Don'ts:

- Training children as adults; having a win-at-all costs mentality
- Not encouraging players to make decisions for themselves

For more information and extra support, contact Matt Rootsey, Football Development Manager at Macarthur Football Association, via email on [matt@macarthurfootball.com.au](mailto:matt@macarthurfootball.com.au)