



First Touch Academy

Teaching the Basics First

VOLUME 1, ISSUE 5

OCTOBER 11, 2009

First Touch Academy News

First Touch Academy Staff:

- Bob Rickards - Coaching Director, Green Bay Lightning
- Blair Bandow
- Erica Barth
- Jacob Depas
- Brian Gerondale
- Erik Loftdahl
- Katie Manders
- Mike LaMere
- Brad Nycz
- Tim Sewell

Kids Soccer is all about the ball. Young kids chase the ball aimlessly and continue to do so until their energy tank runs dry. It is no surprise when you watch young kids playing competitively on a Sunday morning and notice that all the players are positioned around the ball.

The majority of the game is played in one-half and the keeper of the dominating side stands alone kicking at weeds that have protruded through the mud that was once grass. Have you experienced this? Have you seen this?

This is very natural, young kids are full of energy and are extremely hungry for the ball. So what happens when the kid finally gets the ball or receives it? Most kids are not accustomed to having the ball so they quickly give it back and return to the never-ending pursuit for the ball. Young kids have the energy, they have the fitness because they are continuously active and they have the hunger to play the game. So what is lacking?

Most kids lack, and most youth coaches fail to teach, **player**

awareness. A player in possession of the ball must be aware of what is going on around him. He must be aware of all the possible options, whether its passing the ball, shooting, dribbling or kicking the ball out of danger.

Awareness is an essential skill of soccer that is commonly overlooked. After running for some time, the kid finally gets the ball. Most kids touch the ball and feel like they have achieved their goal. This is a common mistake that needs to be rectified at once.

Once the player gets possession of the ball, he should be thinking:

- where are my team mates?
- where are the opposition?
- where are the goals?
- am I under pressure and at risk of losing the ball?

In order to make the right decision, the player must be able to scan the field by looking up off the ball. He must become aware of the surroundings and become mentally quick to adjust to those surroundings. He must be one step ahead of the game.

Keeping your head down and focused on the ball for too long will deny them the chance to make the right decision. If eventually he makes the right decision, he will make it late and the opportunity goes begging.

Any player with the ability to keep his head up, make quick decisions and read the flow of the game will become tomorrow's superstar. I can make this prediction without knowing anything about the kids height, weight, strengths, skills or fitness. Any player that effortlessly controls the ball, looks up and gives a piercing pass through the defense will have no problem playing soccer professionally for the team of his choice.

There is no need to teach young kids to chase the ball. The secret is to teach them what to do when they have possession of the ball. Teach them to look up off the ball and become aware of the situation they're in. This is a great way for your youngster to stand out above the millions of kids that play the game every day.



Soccer World LLC
2300 South Oneida Street #6
Green Bay, WI 54304

"Your One Stop Soccer Shop"

Phone: 920.496.1163
Email: Worldsportsoccer@aol.com

Green Bay Lightning Club Notes:

Spotlight on the GBL U13 Boys' State Team

The GBL U13 Boys' State team, coached by Blair Bandow, Mike LaMere and Brad Nycz, is currently in first place in the State League 1st Division with a 5-0 record. They advanced to the state league this fall after putting together a 10-0-2 record in the 2009 summer season. Players on the team are: Reedan Abid, Tom Brennan, Spencer Collin, Robert Desotelle, Landon Edwards, Jake Hakari, Logan Knoll, Austin Nellis, Brett Patzke, Garitt Pritzl, Nathaniel Schaefer, Joe Schrinier-Schmitt, Will Seehawer, Reid Stevenson, Tristin Warner and Ty Zimmerman.