



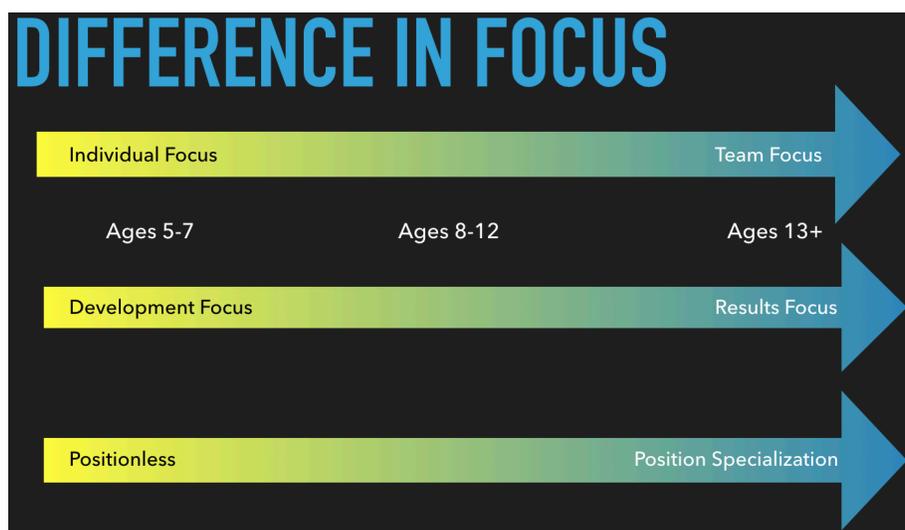
Individual Player Development Plan

To ensure that all players who join Flagstaff Revolution receive coherent and progressive training, Flagstaff Revolution is implementing this Individual Player Development Plan. The Individual Player Development Plan aims to maximize any player's potential as a soccer player. This document will detail coaching focuses for different age groups, player milestones, game formats, and other player development components so that players, coaches, and parents can all work together and support each other.

The standards established by this document apply to all Flagstaff Revolution players and take into account guidance from the US Soccer Player Development Framework. The standards are meant to develop players who embody the Flagstaff Revolution philosophy and style of play.

Developmental Focus by Age

Flagstaff Revolution provides a club environment for youth players from 5-18 years of age. Given the disparate cognitive and physical abilities found in players of those ages, it is necessary that the club place emphasis on different aspects of the game at each age. Flagstaff Revolution, therefore, has divided those age groups into three subcategories: 5-7 years of age, 8-12 years of age, and 13+ years of age.



5-7 Years of Age: Soccer Starts at Home

During these early years, the main point of emphasis is on the individual player's ability and comfort with the ball. Players will learn to manipulate the ball with different parts of *both* feet in training sessions, primarily dribbling and shooting. As players progress,



they will be encouraged to learn to pass and receive the ball with partners. Players will also learn the basic structure of the game—including the direction of play and rules of the game. The end goal of this stage is that players are comfortable with the ball at their feet (both feet), they can pick up their heads while dribbling and find open teammates, and can shoot with some accuracy and power.

One of the most important aspects of this phase is the engagement of parents in the training. Parents will often be encouraged to attend and participate in training sessions so that they can work on the concepts at home.

There will be no formal competition for players at this age.

8-12 Years of Age: Playing as a Team

These years are frequently referred to as the golden development period. As players begin to grow they become more physically aware and are capable of learning more technical skills. Players are also more ready to be introduced to the “team game” with different positions and responsibilities. Coaches will place a high premium on possession-minded soccer and execute training sessions that primarily focus on building the technical and tactical abilities of the players. Now is not the time for specialization and players will play in several positions (if not all positions) in order to become well rounded. It is at this stage where an important part of the club philosophy is implemented “the first defender is the striker and the first attacker is the goalkeeper.” What Johan Cruyff meant with this idea is that attacking players must defend high up the field and goalkeepers must be capable of playing with their feet in order for a team to play proper soccer. Our club embodies this both in style of play and our commitment to allowing players to play in various positions during their development in order to gain the skill needed to play in this fashion.

Players will begin competing in tournaments at the U9 level, introducing them to a higher level of competition and different styles of play. Though competition will be introduced, the main focus of this stage is still on player development.

13+ Years of Age: Winning as a Team

At this age, youth players begin playing full size (11v11) matches and will begin to specialize. Please note that this is the beginning of specialization, not the end. As players continue to grow on and off the field, it is likely that they will play different positions throughout this stage. It is at this stage that teams will begin to place more emphasis on performance and players will be expected to show a more serious commitment to their own development outside of club activities. Players should actively seek to be the best player possible for their team in their role(s) and position(s). Additionally, coaches will begin to consider physical conditioning as an aspect of their training plans.

Teams at this stage should be playing a recognizable style of soccer that is possession-based and places a premium on attacking play.



At the coach's discretion and with parent and player support, teams may begin to play in more competitions beyond tournaments (i.e. league play).

The 10 Year / 10,000 Hour Rule

In his book on human development, *The Talent Code*, Daniel Coyle argues that the 10 year / 10,000 hour rule should serve as a milestone for developing world class talent. While many others, including Anders Ericsson and Malcolm Gladwell, have chronicled the application of this rule in talents such as The Beatles, Mozart, and even the Brontë sisters, Coyle used it to analyze Brazilian players. He found in his time in Brazil that children played 5v5 futsal during every waking moment. The smaller format provided each player with additional time on the ball and opportunities to make soccer decisions (please see the section on Flagstaff Revolution's training methodology).

How Many Hours Will My Player Play with Flagstaff Revolution?

Assuming a player joins the club at the age of 8 and plays for 10 years until they are 18, players can expect to play close to 1900 hours of soccer with the club over those 10 years. This assumes the club plays the maximum amount of practice and game minutes allowed by US Soccer each year. This leaves a serious deficit in terms of the number of hours needed to maximize one's potential as a soccer player—even in the right soccer club.

5 Components of Player Development

This idea was first introduced by 3four3 Coaching and forms part of the Flagstaff Revolution player development strategy. In essence, the idea is that players need to experience the game in five different venues in order to maximize their potential as soccer players.

Players and families should seek out training in each of these different areas.

Home Environment

Is there a soccer culture in the home? Does the family follow a given professional club or national team? Is the player exposed to high-level soccer matches on a weekly basis? A home that provides exposure to the professional game and enthusiasm for the sport in general is more likely to help kids stay engaged and feel motivated to continue training. Their understanding of the game will increase by osmosis.

Playing on Their Own

Players should be playing with a ball often while at home. Practicing their first touch by passing the ball against a wall, juggling, practicing new skill moves, etc. will set them apart from their peers and help lay a solid technical foundation that others will not



have. In a few years, your player will be far beyond the average recreational or high school player as a result of dedicating serious time to playing alone in this manner.

Pick-Up Games

This is the environment where players will become truly confident on the ball and learn to employ higher-level technique and skill. Without adults there to interfere or groan when they lose the ball, players will naturally take each other on and try their best moves. This is the secret to both Brazilian and French success. Their culture of pick-up and street soccer trains everybody to play the game with a little extra flair and skill.

Club Environment

Flagstaff Revolution is entirely dedicated to player development and will seek to instill the principles of play your player needs to succeed at higher levels. The club relies on volunteers to coach but provides them with as many resources as possible including: coaching licenses, equipment, access to premium coaching materials, guidance from experienced coaches within the club.

Personal Training

Personal training provides very specific benefits to the individual player. A personal trainer can help identify and train player deficiencies as well as provide an additional connection to the game for the player. Oftentimes players become fatigued with parental or coach guidance regarding the game and a personal trainer can help to alleviate this fatigue. While some families will find this option cost prohibitive, there are hundreds of online resources that can be leveraged to provide individualized training. Additionally, the club has many ex-players and coaches that are willing to help provide extra training for those who seek it.

Training Methodology

Flagstaff Revolution utilizes a handful of different training methods to help players enter a state of deep practice, wherein they perform repetitive motions or decisions in order to build stronger neuromuscular pathways and become more technically and tactically proficient. For more information on these pathways and deep practice, please see *The Talent Code* by Daniel Coyle.

Rondos

Rondos are small-sided games that place players in small groups and teach them to maintain possession of the ball by passing and controlling the ball, moving to open space, and reading both teammates and opponents. Flagstaff Revolution employs rondos as a training exercise at early ages to begin training proper habits, technical abilities, and especially decision-making in all players. Much of the material for rondo training with Flagstaff Revolution is provided by 3four3 Coaching and books such as *Alchemy Coaching* from Grant Knight and Patrick King.



Small-Sided Games

Small-sided games are one of the most useful training tools not only for technical and tactical development but also for player enjoyment and physical conditioning. A study published in 2020 found that in youth soccer players, small-sided games increased aerobic capacity as well as provided increased technical skill and physical enjoyment when compared to running based, high intensity interval training (Arslan et al., 2020). Flagstaff Revolution utilizes small sided games in nearly every practice to maximize the enjoyment of players and to provide opportunities for players to get repeated practice at making decisions and executing skills in a game-like environment. Sometimes these games will take the form of full 5v5 matches while other times they will consist of 5 attackers trying to build possession out from their own half against 3-5 defenders.

Skill Training

Younger Ages

At younger ages (i.e. 5-7 years old), the club utilizes a methodology very similar to what is presented in *Soccer Starts at Home* by Tom Byer. This methodology focuses on using every part of both feet to move the ball and to learn to change direction and shield the ball from opponents.

Older Ages

As players get older, the club implements more Coerver-style training with an emphasis on learning specific skill moves (e.g. step over, inside/outside cuts, Cruyff turn, etc.) and practicing them in 1v1 and 2v2 situations.

Individual Possession

At all ages, individual possession training is critical to success in playing possession soccer. It is critical that from a young age, players are taught to protect the ball and to maneuver away from opponents. As players mature, they will be trained to have a productive first touch that takes them away from pressure and be encouraged to learn new skills to help them escape pressure from opponents.

Formations

While formations do not fully demonstrate the principles and style of play that a club institutes, the base formations used by Flagstaff Revolution have a developmentally sound progression. Players will see similar positions and player combinations year after year by playing in familiar formations. Coaches may alter these formations temporarily as required due to personnel, opponents, or other factors.



BASE FORMATIONS AND POSITIONS FOR EACH AGE GROUP

Formation	Age Group
<p>4v4</p>	1-2-1
<p>7v7</p>	2-3-1
<p>9v9</p>	2-3-3 or 2-5-1
<p>11v11</p>	4-3-3

Each new formation simply builds on the last, ensuring players play in a familiar system year after year.



Appendix A – Skills by Development Period

Below you will find the roadmap for player skills that the club aims to develop. Flagstaff Revolution leverages the US Soccer Grassroots Roadmap in addition to club-specific skills. Skills are labeled either (A) for attacking or (D) for defensive.

5-7 Years Old

At this stage of development it is critical that the players “fall in love” with the ball. They should have fun dribbling, shooting, and passing and be excited to learn new tricks. This is the foundation for confident players later in life—players who want the ball at their feet and are dangerous when they have it.

US Soccer Grassroots Roadmap Player Actions

U6

- Shoot (A)
- Pass or dribble forward (A)
- Protect the goal (D)
- Steal the ball (D)

U7/U8

- Spread out (A)
- Create passing options (A)
- Support the attack (A)
- Make it compact (D)
- Keep it compact (D)

Revolution Soccer Skills

U6/U7/U8

- Receive the ball in a controlled manner (A)
- Change directions while dribbling (A)
- Use all surfaces of the foot to control the ball/dribble (A)
- Shield the ball from an opponent (A)
- Pass with both feet (A)
- Look (scan the field) (A/D)
- Tackle (D)



8-12 Years Old

This will be the players' first introduction to playing in a system. Players will be expected to learn basic tactics and responsibilities such as how to position themselves to build possession out of our own half. Coaches will begin emphasizing decision-making as well in order to help the players understand how to react to conditions on the field. New player actions are shown in **bold**.

US Soccer Grassroots Roadmap Player Actions

U9/U10

- Shoot (A)
- Pass or dribble forward (A)
- Spread out (A)
- Create passing options (A)
- Support the attack (A)
- **Create a 2v1 or 1v1 (A)**
- **Change the point of attack (A)**
- Protect the goal (D)
- Steal the ball (D)
- Make it compact (D)
- Keep it compact (D)
- **Pressure, cover, balance (D)**
- **Outnumber the opponent (D)**

U11/U12

- Shoot (A)
- Pass or dribble forward (A)
- Spread out (A)
- Create passing options (A)
- Support the attack (A)
- Create a 2v1 or 1v1 (A)
- Change the point of attack (A)
- **Change the pace/rhythm (A)**
- **Switch positions (A)**
- Protect the goal (D)
- Steal the ball (D)
- Make it compact (D)
- Keep it compact (D)
- Pressure, cover, balance (D)
- Outnumber the opponent (D)
- **Stay involved (D)**
- **Mark the player/mark the area (D)**



Revolution Soccer Skills

U9-U12

- Receive the ball in a controlled manner (A)
- Change directions while dribbling (A)
- Use all surfaces of the foot to control the ball/dribble (A)
- Shield the ball from an opponent (A)
- Pass with both feet (A)
- **Receive the ball across the body (use the backfoot) (A)**
- **Receive the ball on the half-turn (A)**
- **Use stops/starts while dribbling to beat defenders (A)**
- **Use feints while dribbling to beat defenders (A)**
- **One-touch finishing (A)**
- **Invite pressure (A)**
- **Evade 1v1 pressure (A)**
- **Know when to recycle possession (A)**
- **Play around/through pressure (A)**
- **Play aerial passes (A) (U11/U12)**
- Look (scan the field) (A/D)
- Tackle (D)
- **Press with a teammate in win the ball in the opponent's half (D)**
- **Delay an opponent (D)**
- **Jockey, force a defender in a specific direction**
- **Spot and mark open runners (D)**

13+ Years Old

At this point players should have a solid foundation for playing possession soccer and can begin layering additional skills. Players at this age will begin to specialize in positions and will prioritize the development of the requisite skills for those positions.

US Soccer Grassroots Roadmap Player Actions

- Shoot (A)
- Pass or dribble forward (A)
- Spread out (A)
- Create passing options (A)
- Support the attack (A)
- Create a 2v1 or 1v1 (A)
- Change the point of attack (A)
- Protect the goal (D)
- Steal the ball (D)
- Make it compact (D)
- Keep it compact (D)



- Pressure, cover, balance (D)
- Outnumber the opponent (D)

Revolution Soccer Skills

- Receive the ball in a controlled manner (A)
 - Change directions while dribbling (A)
 - Use all surfaces of the foot to control the ball/dribble (A)
 - Shield the ball from an opponent (A)
 - Pass with both feet (A)
 - Receive the ball across the body (use the backfoot) (A)
 - Receive the ball on the half-turn (A)
 - Use stops/starts while dribbling to beat defenders (A)
 - Use feints while dribbling to beat defenders (A)
 - One-touch finishing (A)
 - Invite pressure (A)
 - Evade 1v1 pressure (A)
 - Know when to recycle possession (A)
 - Play around/through pressure (A)
 - Play aerial passes (A) (U11/U12)
 - **Combine feints/starts/stops/change of direction to beat opponents (A)**
 - **Disguise passes, receptions, shots, etc. (A)**
 - **Shoot with both feet (A)**
 - Look (scan the field) (A/D)
 - Tackle (D)
 - **Press with multiple teammates in win the ball in the opponent's half (D)**
 - Delay an opponent (D)
 - Jockey, force a defender in a specific direction
 - Spot and mark open runners (D)
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