

Coach Information



Eliot Pridoehl has nearly a decade of progressive success in coaching youth soccer in both grassroots and high performance settings. Eliot has also failed, and through failure, has listened, learned, corrected, and improved. Over time, Eliot has developed a unique identity that is particularly strong in applying possession fundamentals at the youth level, which is often evident during gameplay. Eliot has been an apprentice directly & indirectly with numerous proven coaches and is a lifelong learner of soccer. Eliot coaches because of the reward of seeing a player develop, improve, and find success.

Eliot holds a CSA-NCCP certified 'C' license- having completed and passed all required assignments, required theory exams, and final on-field examination by the Ontario Soccer evaluation team. In addition Eliot has an OSA mini, youth, senior, LTT, and SFL certificate, USSF F license (U6-U8 development), and a Coerver Youth Diploma.

Coach Identity

All players will be introduced to a very well defined and inclusive team identity that will include the same *style* and *system of play*. Offensively, their identity will be *possession* soccer. Defensively our players will be trained to provide choreographed team *pressure*. This is non-negotiable for their development.

The goal is for all players to be like minded, equally dangerous, eventually thinking and moving like 1 unit as opposed to 11 individuals on the field.

Possession

Possession is mandatory when the team has the ball. Building out of the back in every type of scenario is encouraged with all players/teams from u9-u20.

Goal kicks will not be kicked aimlessly forward; rather the goalkeeper will primarily look to play short to the center backs on the sides of the 18, or alternatively holding/central midfielder or outside backs. The majority of the 11 a side attacking patterns start from the fullbacks, where players will also be encouraged to pass the ball backwards, as required, to escape pressure or reset to build their attack from the back.

In addition to the technical quality needed to retain possession players constantly rehearse 3 other elements the players need to in order for the team to monopolize possession.

1. Spacing
2. Talking/Advising
3. Awareness

Pressure

Pressure is the other half of the established team identity. Organized team pressure in unison is difficult for any player/opponent to overcome. Choreographed team pressure is constantly rehearsed so that our players can recover possession of the ball after losing it, and taking into account where the possession is lost on the pitch. Ideally we recover the ball deep into the opponent's defensive third enabling us to be in attacking position and as far from our own goal as possible.

System of play

The 4 a side indoor sessions will use 1-2-1 formation [support/width/penetration] while the 6 aside will use a 1-2-1-2 formation. These will be transferred outdoors either within a 7 a side gameplay that uses a 1-2-3-1 formation [u9-u10], or 9 a side 1-4-1-2-1 (or 2-1-2-3) formation [u11-u12]. All of these formations will lead to and prepare players for the 11 a side 1-4-3-3 formation [u13+], adding complexity without losing purpose, while continuously building upon previously developed choreography. Technical and tactical activities in each session prepare the players to develop individually and collectively.

Examples of team identity

u11 outdoor	U12 and u13 indoor	u13 outdoor
[goal kick choreography] www.facebook.com/londonfootballacademy/videos/504125453087584	[first u12 9v9 game v WNY Flash 'A'] https://vimeo.com/152447762	[style of play/building from back] https://vimeo.com/233022889
[style of play] www.facebook.com/londonfootballacademy/videos/505555939611202	[style of play/build from back] https://vimeo.com/205496933	[style of play/building from back] https://vimeo.com/233016335
	[style of play/build from back] https://vimeo.com/205497852	[goal kick choreography] https://vimeo.com/221523425
	[style of play/build from back] https://vimeo.com/205497430	[transition] https://vimeo.com/221524207

Coach development plan and core building blocks

Technical building blocks

- Ball mastery
- Limited and progressive pressure activities
- Full pressure activities

Tactical building blocks

- How to transition into attack
- How to build out of the back
- How to attack
- How to transition into defending
- How to press defensively

All sessions will incorporate decision making, and blend in functional choreography proportionally considering participant age. These training blocks, together with proven activities, are what provide players a foundation upon which to layer in further complexities of the game including defined style and system of play from u9-u20.

Coach Philosophy

'Development' vs 'winning' philosophy

The goal of soccer training should be to win every soccer game and tournament at the highest equivalent level. However at times this may become counterproductive for player development and mislead parents regarding perceived 'talent'. For every match, a possession-based coach must decide whether or not to compromise their ideology and philosophy particularly when facing opponents whose rosters are that are filled with naturally stronger and faster players. This coaching discipline is often lacking or overlooked, as the latter option is often easier and yields short term success.

The fact is you cannot find immediate success in *youth soccer* unless you have access to a critical mass of players, are an expert marketer (or hack), have inherited a previously well coached and developed team, or consume your efforts to take away best players from competing programs that often includes adult trickery. While this is not always the case, a coach or club having the need to proclaiming greatness at the youngest ages can often fall within one of these categories. In contrast, in many soccer nations around the world results do not matter during the formative years (youth academy), with few exceptions. Not only does winning playing ugly go uncelebrated, it is not tolerated.

Definition of success

There are two ways that a youth coach can choose to win; 1) monopolizing possession or 2) playing direct soccer with limited purpose. **Success at youth soccer is monopolizing possession, building out of the back, circulating with purpose, playing attractive attacking soccer, and working tirelessly to recover possession immediately through choreographed high pressure defending.** The only alternative, is winning a game playing ugly direct soccer. While many coaches train and advocate a disconnected variation of possession soccer; the majority also throw it out the window during match play. External pressures too often encourage an undisciplined coach towards a 'must win scenario', often due to parental (not player) demands to beat a rival club, team, or even player/parent. This is another reason why coach discipline is a requirement and parents understand this behavior is not part of their child's success or development, and is rather a complete distraction.

There are undeniable risks when playing out of the back and the norm is never to risk this behavior. However, in order to develop intelligent players we must build their soccer IQ through possession soccer at the earliest age. Teams will lose however their development will not be compensated as a result. **You cannot master building from the back if it is not constantly applied from u8-u20.**

Over time, with countless hours of tactical work, failure and losses by conceding goals through mistakes, building out of the back will become second nature. After many years of persistent application in real game scenarios, we are achieving player development and will find success for our players and our teams.

Success, as previously defined, can take months to years, depending on age, the technical and tactical level of the inherited roster, the level and philosophy of the previous coach, intrinsic motivation of the players, and if the player and group are continuously executing the fundamental activities effectively at a similar level. However, a common identity, similar level of development, and similar passion must exist prior to achieving any success.

You cannot layer in other principles until after each player within a roster demonstrates a level of mastery with your core material. Initial training does not focus on continuously practicing set plays, offside traps, free kicks, and a variety of other low priority activities. All these strategies are components to be layered in slowly after the core has been 'mastered', and only after the team identity has been clearly established. The best soccer academies in the world continue to focus on these basics at the highest levels.

Training

During training players are expected to be intrinsically and completely consumed to compete against themselves and players at a high game-like intensity to improve. Alternatively, games are used as a method for players to apply and showcase their technical skills enhanced with each training session and provide them a method to execute their knowledge and ability to solve new problems presented with very limited coach interference.

While often debated, past experience has proven that to maximize improvement players should be trained in smaller groups (approximately 1 coach to 10-15 players) with other players of similar technical, tactical, and intrinsic qualities. While sessions can be tailored to mix substantially different levels, development is compensated. Similarly, teams should compete against equivalent players, ideally against those with similar identity and philosophy.

'Serious' fun

Developing players does not involve repetitious drills, false praise, or promises. It involves 'serious fun' through stimulation and creating an environment of problem solving using their developed skillsets. If the identity, philosophy, and style of play are clearly communicated, the level of training intensity and healthy competition demanded from each athlete will make the actual games much more enjoyable, satisfying, and meaningful to the player (and parents). Participants will naturally learn to love the game when they are taught how to play it properly.

No identity, no connection of activities, no philosophy = no development

Having activities without a purpose or defined style or system creates no continuity in your training. Which means:

- Players aren't getting a simple message (the philosophy) because often you do not have one.
- Players can't achieve a level of mastery in the skills associated with a particular activity and translate into a game.
- Coaches are not achieving a level or purpose of mastery with a particular activity but expect their players to blindly execute in a game.
- Players cannot problem solve on the field because you have not given them the proper training environment.

Training will link a small set of core activities that properly support the type of possession football we want to play and the type of player we want to develop.

Coach Contact

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