



### **COACHING** HANDBOOK

Giving the game back to the players.

GLOBALSTREETSOCCER.COM

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### THE GSS PHILOSOPHY

There was a time when children played football in the streets and courts with their friends. It was a joyful time. They spent hours outside in all sorts of weather creating their own games and experimenting with all sorts of tricks and skills without criticism or correction. They corrected themselves because they wanted to get better and enjoy the thrill of mastery, not from a pressure to win. This is natural for children.

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#### AT THE SAME TIME...

They taught each other skills they attempted to emulate their soccer heroes that they watched on TV. The game belonged to the children and if they didn't like it they created a new game with new challenges. They didn't need adults or coaches to have fun or to improve. They didn't need adults to create rules or to referee the games.

They sorted things out themselves so that they could have fun.

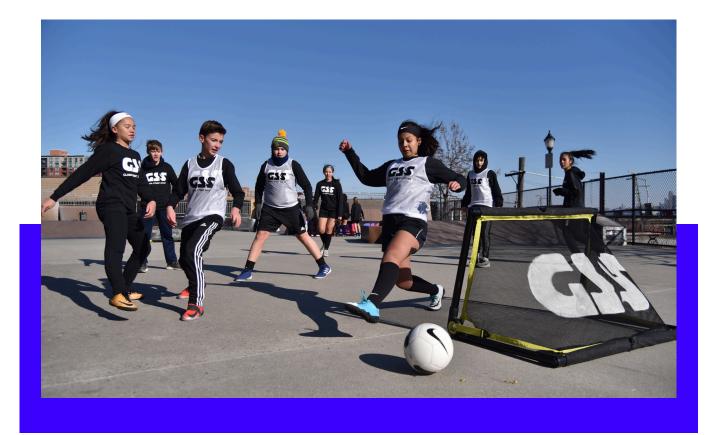
If the rules weren't clear and players argued, then they went through the process of resolving the issues. This is also an important skill.

#### THEY SIMPLY WANTED TO ENJOY THEMSELVES, EXPRESS THEMSELVES, MAKE FRIENDS, AND CREATE.

At Global Street Soccer, we are recreating the environment that children once loved one that allowed many incredible talents to flourish such as Lionel Messi, Christian Pulisic, Marta, Lauren James, and Luis Suárez etc.

We are giving the game back to the players (where it belongs) and we have created a groundbreaking curriculum to facilitate this.

### THIS IS OUR MISSION,



# WHAT IS STREET SOCCER?

Street Soccer has always been played in different forms all over the world. Players have created their own games or have played a regular game with varying numbers in order to make it competitive. Sometimes they simply practiced skills, juggled, or set each other challenges.

#### **MODERN STREET SOCCER**

- Since the 1990's, street soccer in an entertaining form has found its way into our front rooms initially through the Nike 'Joga Bonito' adverts which appeared before the World Cup in 2006 and featured footballing greats such as Ronaldinho alongside street soccer influencers such as Edward Van Gils.
- Since then computer games such as FIFA Street have also featured iconic footballing stars and the wonderful skills for which they have become famous.



#### **JOGA BONITO NIKE COMMERCIAL**

### WHAT MAKES GLOBAL STREET SOCCER UNIQUE?

Learn 9 ways GSS programs are challenging the status quo of soccer coaching and methodology.

#### **1. THE COACH IS A GUIDE NOT AN INSTRUCTOR**

The GSS coach is there for the players and constantly models curiosity in how improvements can be achieved. He/she can be considered a fellow inquirer. The aim is to create an environment where the players thrive as unique individuals. The practice is to initially set up activities that the players love and through which they learn via their own experience. The coach is not there to tell the players how to be better players!

The coach will ask players questions in order to help them learn and will exhibit a genuine interest in the responses. If a player is struggling and asks for help, then the coach may demonstrate a skill or suggest something to experiment with. The coach never assumes the position of being an expert on what is best for an individual player. Never!

#### 2. FOCUS ON ENJOYMENT, CREATIVITY, AND EXPRESSION NOT WINNING

We believe it is essential that the players enjoy themselves when playing football. Our activities are designed to maximize fun and enjoyment. Our activities also allow players to try new skills and to develop their own unique style. Mistakes are an important and necessary part of this process and don't require constant correction. We might use a points system as a motivator during games but we are not really interested in who wins.

#### We are interested in fun, creativity, experimentation and expression.

We are also interested in children developing to be leaders in their own lives and a positive influence in the lives of others. We can think of a Global Street Soccer session as an artistic environment where we all truly play and grow.

#### **3. FOCUS ON POSITIVE FEEDBACK NOT CRITICISM**

The coach is not primarily focused on correcting players. The aim is that the players will do this themselves. The coach may ask questions of the players and have short conversations about what might lead to success in the activities. This is known as 'discovery learning' where the players learn through paying attention to their own experience thus developing their own unique style. We develop their facility for paying attention and subsequent reflexivity.

The coach can give positive feedback when they see something done well and we also give positive feedback for commitment levels and the willingness to try something new. There will be many opportunities for this. Most of us grew up being constantly corrected or criticized at school and elsewhere. This is an environment where we do the opposite. We praise children but make sure the praise is genuine otherwise there is no credibility.

#### **4. PLAYERS LEARN TO INVENT THEIR OWN GAMES**

Over time our aim is to encourage and provide opportunities for players to create their own games and share them with others. This encourages creativity, confidence, and leadership. Creating a game and then seeing others playing it will really grow our players as people and inspire others to do the same. We want these children going back to their communities, or online with new street soccer games and sharing them as we once did. We would love to see the children on the fields, courts and streets loving the game again.

#### **5. PLAYERS LEARN TO TEACH EACH OTHER**

This program focuses very much on the enjoyable development of new skills, tricks and techniques simply for the love of the game. This enables each player to develop their own signature moves and skills, which they can share with others. During our sessions players will have the opportunity to teach others their favorite skills thereby improving others whilst growing in confidence themselves. The sessions are about fun and improvement for the whole group therefore our aim is to develop a 'we' mentality whilst also improving players as individuals. This has implications for how we frame competition in our sessions. If the competition is too serious then why would players help each other?

#### 6. PLAYERS LEARN TO ORGANIZE EQUIPMENT

Our aim over time is to have the players taking care of the equipment. The set up of the fields is very similar for each session and the ideal is that the players are able to set the equipment up and also bring it into the coach at the end. This is part of leadership and taking responsibility. This is about being part of a team. Initially this will need to be directed and supervised but should become natural after a while. The skill of the coach is in developing this.

#### 7. PLAYERS CAN MODIFY THE PLAYING AREA

The players might find that the areas are sometimes too small or sometimes too big for them to really enjoy the games. In this case they are encouraged to modify the playing area by making it longer, shorter, wider, narrower. They can also modify the size of the goals and even the type of ball being used for the game. In this way the players are really taking ownership for their experience and are posing various 'soccer problems' to solve for themselves and the group. As the sessions continue the coach may be happy for the players to actually modify the rules.

#### 8. PLAYERS LEARN THROUGH EXPERIENCE AND INQUIRY

The players should spend the majority of the time playing and NOT listening to a coach. Most of the learning will come simply from playing, experimenting, trial and correction. These sessions are not like the regular coaching sessions you might see where the coach is stopping the players and telling them what they are doing wrong. Many coaches feel they are not doing their job if they are not shouting and instructing. Street soccer is for the players to enjoy and express themselves. Mistakes are an important part of development. Let it happen and observe very, very carefully!

If players ask for help with a technique or strategy then the coach may offer suggestions that the players can try. The coach does not offer advice as an expert but as a fellow inquirer. The players should not be relying on the coaches as experts in how they themselves should play or perform.

#### 9. PLAYERS BRING THEIR OWN MUSIC

An enjoyable part of the session is to include music, which motivates. Initially the coach can do this and might play music during the warm up but will certainly play in the games at the end. After the first few weeks a system can be set up where the players bring the music. The coach might allow the players to organize this for themselves. Again, they will develop co-operation, communication and leadership.

### FURTHER



At GSS, we champion a player-centered approach to learning and coaching, drawing from pioneers like Tim Gallwey and the TGFU method developed by Rod Thorpe and Dave Bunker. Gallwey's insights into self-directed learning and the TGFU focus on game-based, experiential learning inspire our methods, which prioritize player discovery and engagement over traditional drills. This philosophy, also known as 'Game Sense' in Australia and New Zealand, fosters skill development in a natural, enjoyable context, embodying the spirit of the beautiful game. Let's dig in further.

#### 1. PLAYERS LEARN THROUGH THEIR OWN EXPERIENCE

At GSS we use terms such as player-centered education, experiential learning and the discovery method. These terms refer to a departure from the traditional model of teaching and learning which relied on a teacher imparting knowledge, to a system whereby the students take some responsibility for what they are learning and how to apply it. Our philosophy has been inspired by several great thinkers.

#### 2. COACH THE PLAYERS TO PAY ATTENTION TO THEIR EXPERIENCE

In the United States during the 1970's the legendary tennis coach Tim Gallwey was discovering that the more he taught and corrected his players, the worse they often got. He noticed that the less he taught, the more they learnt for themselves. His sense was that it was essential for the player to pay careful attention to his or her own experience in the moment rather than an ongoing commentary (whether internal or external) of criticism and imperatives. The age-old idea that a coach imparting 'expert' knowledge would automatically guarantee a player's learning and improvement was now under question. From these observations, Gallwey developed his revolutionary 'Inner Game' theories and first published the Inner Game of Tennis (1974).

#### **3. COACH THROUGH GAMES NOT DRILLS**

We are also grateful for the wonderful work of two visionary Physical Education lecturers who worked during the 1980's and 1990's at Loughborough University. Rod Thorpe and Dave Bunker designed a way of teaching PE known as Teaching Games for Understanding (TGFU), which was a radical change from the old system of teaching, which had been through a sequence of a warm up, isolated technical activities and then finishing with a game. They proposed a system of teaching and coaching which focused more on playing modified games where students and players could explore strategy and decision-making in a context which was far more realistic and enjoyable than isolated activities such as standing in line and shooting unopposed at a goal. The game was being handed back to the players and the teachers and coaches were seeing the benefits of higher levels of engagement.

#### 4. DEVELOPING GAME INTELLIGENCE

This TGFU method enabled students to play enjoyable and challenging variations of traditional games in order to achieve desired outcomes. Games might include modifications such as playing with more than one ball or in another example playing on a field, which is short and very wide with four goals to develop peripheral vision and improve decision-making in attack. The game itself is the teacher and the players are forced to pay attention to this new environment through these new rules. The learning is mainly through experience, variable repetition, incisive questioning and debate. This was an exciting and innovative movement that caught on in some areas but many practitioners were reluctant to change methods that had been in place and unquestioned for a long time.

#### 5. RELAX AND TRUST IN THE PLAYERS' ABILITY TO LEARN

Many coaches and teachers were anxious about handing the learning over to the players fearing a loss of control or a perception from others that they were not actually doing anything. The philosophy was enthusiastically embraced in Australia and New Zealand where it became known as 'Game Sense'. It is one of the main tools in the coaching armory of the All Blacks where Assistant Coach Wayne Smith pioneered its deployment.

#### 6. THE BEAUTIFUL GAME

Our methods combine the great games that were played on the streets with the visionary philosophy of coaching highlighted above. It is a wonderful combination that can be used in the streets, beaches or fields. Anyone can play and enjoy this version of the sport. It's the beautiful game.



# GSS COACHING: THE ESSENTIALS

Our coaching courses are about actually elevating coaching standards rather than handing over a body of rigid content. It is about improving the level of coaching so that the players are given the best possible opportunity to improve. If the players are consistently improving and enjoying themselves at the same time then we are moving in the right direction!

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#### THE AIM

The aim of GSS is to give clear, practical guidelines on how to provide the best possible learning experience for your players. With this in mind our resources include a series of session plans that can be used with the players over the course of a season. Each session is not only explained but important questions are answered:

- What are the main objectives of the session?
- How can I develop a system of scoring to motivate the players and make it fun?
- How can I progress smoothly to the next activity?
- How can I make the activities more complex?





When coaching young children it is important to consider the reasons for their participation. It is equally important to look at our own motivating factors in choosing to coach, and to consider if they are appropriate for the age group and level we are working with. The vast majority of young children will participate for the following reasons:

#### 1. TO HAVE FUN

There can be little doubt that the main aim for most children is to have fun. If they are having fun they will be motivated to listen and to learn. If they are not having fun they will simply not wish to be part of the program. This has clear implications for the style of session that we deliver for the children. Surely our primary aim is to keep the children interested for as many years as possible and to impart a love of the game. Our specific aim at GSS is that the players go away and practice on their own and with friends because of their love of the game. We do this through exciting, stimulating practices and realistic expectations.

#### 2. TO BE WITH FRIENDS

The social benefits of soccer cannot be overestimated. In the right environment the children make new friends and can develop their relationship with established friends through a common interest. Often the presence of friends and the opportunity to interact is more important than the game itself. This sometimes depends on the level of play that the players aspire to but the truth is that the vast majority of players will not play at the elite level.

#### **3. THE EXCITEMENT OF COMPETITION**

There are many exciting activities in our courses for the children to enjoy. There is an element of competition in each of them, which will without doubt motivate the children to participate enthusiastically. However, the coach will play a very important role in shaping the players' attitude towards competition. An important lesson for our youth is to learn is how to cope with winning and losing. Therefore, the way the coach reacts to the winners and losers of different activities will be noticed and absorbed by the children.

#### 4. TO LEARN AND IMPROVE SKILLS

This might not be the initial factor that motivates the children to play. However, many of the players may take enough interest to start practicing various skills at home. They will take pleasure in mastering skills that they have been taught so that they can show their family, coach and friends a level of competence.

#### 5. THE DESIRE TO PLAY AT A HIGHER LEVEL

As they mature the players will become more independent and some will develop ambitions to play at a higher level in the years to come. Their motivation will be more intrinsic and they will be more 'driven'.



It is crucial that the coach considers the above factors when working with a group.

If the children are improving, having fun, and keep coming back to play soccer then the coach must be succeeding.

#### SO WHY DO SOME CHILDREN DROP OUT?

So why do some children drop out of soccer? The answers to this question must be that the soccer program they are currently participating in is no longer satisfying their motivational needs. At this point they are:

- Not having fun
- Not enjoying the relationships in the program
- Not experiencing the excitement that healthy competition provides
- Failing to learn and improve new skills

As coaches we have a responsibility to ensure that this does not happen!

Coaches often feel that they should be shouting, ordering, directing and demanding standards of the players. They sometimes believe that winning is very important. There is also a universal belief that players will improve simply because someone else tells them what to do or shows them how to do something.

#### This is a myth!

Educational research shows that this is a myth and yet some teachers and coaches still persist in these methods. If we consider our own experiences in life and sport we know that telling people what to do has very little impact on performance.

We are very clear at GSS that there is far more to coaching than simply telling people what to do, though we accept that sharing our experience plays a part. We are passionate about the learning process and sharing these principles with others.

# WHAT PLAYERS CAN EXPECT FROM THE GSS COACH

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#### CHILDREN CAN EXPECT:

- Help, encouragement, and support
- ✓ Not to be embarrassed by the coaches working with them

#### CHILDREN CAN EXPECT THEIR COACH TO:

- Remain positive in all interactions
- Praise effort over performance and results
- ✓ Assess players accurately with their regard to their skills and attitude
- ✓ Be available for clear, sensitive feedback designed to improve future performance
- Emphasize players and relationships first and performance second
- Display patience
- Demonstrate examples of excellent behavior
- ✓ Show consistency

#### CHILDREN CAN EXPECT THAT COACHES DO NOT:

- ✓ Shout, argue, swear, become violent or use disparaging remarks
- Ignore children who need support
- Assess players by their weaknesses
- ✓ Dictate to the players whilst they are playing

It is important that adults remain positive when interacting with children. Children find it difficult to understand negative instructions and easier to understand positive reinforcement. By playing down the result and playing up the effort and performance the fear of failure and anxiety will decrease. Players do not mean to make mistakes in the same way that referees and coaches do not mean to make mistakes. Making mistakes is an integral part of the learning process for all of us.

It is important to remember what our role is, what our goals are and how we wish to be remembered by the players. A youth coach is an educator and is responsible for far more than simply winning soccer games.

#### **QUALITIES OF THE MODEL COACH**

- A caring demeanor
- 🧹 Enthusiasm
- Integrity
- Patience
- A balanced perspective
- Knowledge
- Ability to inspire
- Good communication skills
- Precision of language
- Encourages high standards of commitment and behavior
- Persistence
- Pride in appearance and performance
- An open and inquiring mind

# INTEGRATING ALL FOUR COMPONENTS OF SOCCER IN EVERY SESSION

When planning the content of our sessions we need to be mindful of the age of the players and the essential components of the game that we should be addressing. There are actually four recognized 'components' of the game and they are:

- Technical
- Tactical
- Physical
- Psychological

Whilst all the components should be addressed, the relative emphasis depends on:

- Age
- Ability
- Experience
- · Coaching environment e.g. recreational, local league, academy, international

Each player will aim to consistently develop in these four key areas or 'components' and therefore the coach should integrate them into the sessions throughout the season. At GSS, these elements are integrated through a technical warm up and then game related activities. We address all these components within the same activities.

#### **1. TECHNICAL**

Technical practice is often synonymous with boring 'drills'. At GSS, we integrate the component of technique in the warm ups and then allow the players to develop these techniques themselves through relevant 1 v 1 and small sided practices. At GSS, we believe that players develop through 'doing' and 'reflecting'. We do not believe in the learning value or efficacy of 'telling'.

#### 2. TACTICAL

The game of soccer includes a great deal of tactical thinking because of the number of players and the dynamic flow of the play. When people discuss tactics they often begin talking about complex formations and the respective benefits of each. This is not our focus. The building block of the tactical game is the  $1 \vee 1$  situation and then progresses to  $2 \vee 2$ ,  $3 \vee 3$ . These foundations of the tactical game must be developed in a smooth progression if the children are to become 'intelligent' soccer players otherwise they will be overwhelmed. At GSS, we progress from different  $1 \vee 1$  activities into other small sided fun games which allow the players to solve 'soccer problems' (as defined in the Netherlands) amongst themselves. Children are naturally limited by their cognitive development and often do not understand coaches' instructions or subsequent frustrations. So we let them play!

#### **3. PHYSICAL**

A good level of fitness is an essential part of being a good soccer player. The game is very physically demanding and because of its dynamic nature there is very little time to rest. To prepare players for the game, context relevant fitness must be integrated into the training environment. Conditioning need not be synonymous with running laps around a field but can be developed effectively through intense activities such as 1 v 1, 2 v 2 and 3 v 3 games. At GSS, our interest in activity levels is simply as a healthy contribution to the wellbeing of our players rather than serious conditioning. To maximize the health aspect, the breaks and discussions during the session should be short.

#### 4. PSYCHOLOGICAL

This is probably the most complex of the four components because the psychological state of an individual, especially at a young age, is determined by so many factors unrelated to the training or game day environment. That is not to say, however, that coaches cannot influence this state. If a coach is organized, motivated, caring and inspirational at the same time this will have a huge psychological impact on the players. They will view soccer as a positive and enjoyable experience.

Our aim is to create a nurturing environment where the players feel respected by the coach and by each other. We aim to develop a culture whereby the players are able to actively affect each others psychological state through healthy and supportive relationships.

This is one of the core concepts in our model and we are proactive in delivering on this.