

THE ACADEMY WAY
11v11 METHODOLOGY
“growing talent”



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“To create a player-centric environment for the development of technical and intuitive players that can perform under pressure”

SYSA founded the Sudbury Academy Program in the Fall of 2010 on one principle: to develop committed players who have the tools necessary to prosper at each level.

The Academy offers each player a cutting edge professional curriculum and coaching, designed to develop the individual player at each age level in a positive and creative environment. Soccer is a game of skill and creativity.

The Sudbury Academy Program delivers a consistent and integrated curriculum to develop skill while encouraging creative ideas while building a passion for the game.

*The Sudbury Soccer Academy Program:
Skills Academy + Academy Squads*

The Academy Squads are an expansion of our Skills Academy.

The Skills Academy and Academy Squad training follow a comprehensive age-specific curriculum, designed by our USSF A and Scottish FA licensed Technical Director, Ross Duncan, from the New England Revolution Academy. The curriculum uses best practices and innovative teaching structures and techniques from Ajax, Zagreb and NE Revolution Academies.

Skills Academy: The Skills Academy offers professional coaching and a curriculum designed to progressively build skills and awareness appropriate for each age group, and to encourage players to practice hard and build a passion for the game. The Skills Academy is run by the New England Revolution Academy as a supplemental program to SYSA’s Sudbury Soccer League (In Town) and BAYS programs.

Academy Squad Training: Squad players go through an advanced program focused on technical development and learning game-like situations in functional and situational sessions. Players selected for a Squad compete as a team in a conventional competitive league and regional tournaments.

Academy Squad Focus: The Squads’ focus is on developing young players to reach the next level, rather than focusing on winning the score line. The driving philosophy of the Squad is to place players first, not team record and reputation. The focus is on giving players the “toolkit” – skills, tactical awareness and mental focus – necessary for success at the highest level each player can achieve.



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The Environment



It is very important to create an environment where players are challenged and stretched to the limit of their ability. That training environment is called “Deep Practice” where players are forced to think faster and make quicker decisions, helping them build up their soccer matrix. This optimum environment allows players to reach their “Sweet Spot” for training and as a coach it should be your goal to create this environment with every training session.

How do we create this environment?

Command of the group and push the players, this is done in a positive way, no laps or push ups, and always referenced with what it takes to become an elite player.

Unique and Innovative Restrictions which allow us to withdraw high level play from each exercise in a natural and competitive manner.

Squeeze the space so that the area is a little tight.....this again will force players to have to think quicker and make faster decisions

Correct Mistakes as players make them.....Mistakes are simply guideposts to improving technique and/or decision making. Point out the mistake, Fix it, give encouragement by recognizing the improvement

Coach the Individuals as well as the group as a whole. We will put different restrictions on players that have superior technique.

Let the players play by using the toolkit of coaching styles: Coach in the flow of the game, coach at natural stoppages, coach Individuals, Coach the team, Freeze method





Hard Skills are actions that are performed correctly and consistently as possible every time. Hard skills are about repeatable precision with the goal to build a skill that functions like a swiss watch – reliable, exact, and performed the same way every time, automatically, without fail. **ABC – Always Be Consistent**

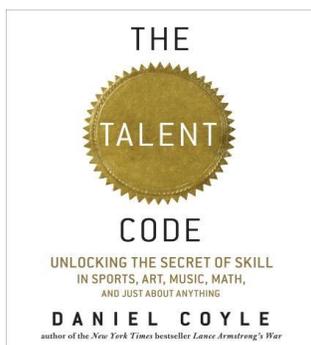
To Improve Hard Skills Work like a carpenter

Be precise and measured, one simple move at a time, repeating and perfecting before you move on, pay attention to errors and fix them, particularly at the start. * *Recognizing and fixing errors in technique is especially important when working with young soccer players. Being specific with the errors and how to correct them by demonstrating is equally important.* Precision especially matters early on because the first reps establish the pathways for the future. Neurologists call this the “sled on a snowy hill” phenomenon.

Soft skills are about being agile and interactive; about instantly recognizing patterns as they unfold and making smart, timely choices. The ability to recognize a pattern or possibility, and to work past a complex set of obstacles. Soft skills are about the three R’s: Reading, Recognizing, and Reacting.

To build Soft Skills – Play like a skateboarder

Soft skills catch our eye as they are beautiful – think of Messi improvising his way to a brilliant goal or Jimi Hendrix blazing through a guitar solo. These talents seem magical and unique. In fact they are the result of super-fast brain software recognizing patterns and responding in just the right way. Think of Brazils Futsal (soccer in a room) and in the words of Emilio Miranda, professor of soccer at University of Sao Paulo, the “Laboratory of Improvisation”. Creating an environment where players are challenged in ever changing environments. Creativity is encouraged, like a skate boarder: aggressive, curious and experimental, always seeking new ways to challenge.



From “The Talent Code” by Daniel Coyle





Training: The academy players train in an up tempo, high frequency and positive environment. The sessions are highly technical to improve individual skill which will transition into how they play on the field in the Academy Squad.

Games: The Squad approaches games with a developmental focus. At the youth level, players must have the opportunity to be creative without the fear of being dropped if they make a mistake. Winning in a development game means achieving a skill... pass count, connecting passes, breaking lines rather than just about the score.

In Possession

When the Academy Squad is in possession of the ball, the players will play a short passing game where they will be required to think, perform, and execute techniques under pressure. Players will be encouraged to find joy in keeping the ball from the opposition “in control” until the “moment” to move the ball forward arises “in attack”.

The Squad is encouraged to play the ball out of the back, despite the high risk of error. We believe that youth soccer players should be encouraged to be creative, skillful and challenged without fear of failure.

Goal kicks, Throw-ins, Corners and Free Kicks are to be used as opportunities to be creative. We encourage our players to play short connecting passes at these set pieces.

The Squad will have certain goals to achieve each game to improve their level of play. One of the main goals will be to complete a set number of passes per game.

Out of Possession

The Squads’ work ethic and team unity will be questioned every time we lose the ball. It is expected that players have positive attitudes and work tirelessly to get the ball back. We expect players to WANT to work to get the ball back.

We put our players into learning situations on the field and the biggest part of learning is making mistakes and getting back up.



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The Numbers

Players must have the opportunity to express themselves during both training and games to master their understanding of the game. To develop youth players in this way we must have a system in place that can create the appropriate environment.

Playing a certain position in soccer is long gone! Players of the modern game must read the game and adopt the best area of the field to occupy in order to exploit weaknesses of the opposition. So rather than give players positions we give them roles. Roles are represented by numbers. Each number has a primary task to be fulfilled but it also allows for creative movement in attack which will make it very difficult for the opposition to defend against.

We start this number system at 4v4 and work through 6v6 and 8v8 before arriving at 11v11. Numbers farthest away are players who start closest to our own goal.

Players must be exposed to all numbers at a young age. Once they arrive at 11v11 certain players will have adopted traits that will characterize them as a certain role; although they may be played in their favored role more often, they must still be exposed others. It is very common for players to move to different positions as they move up in age or play for different coaches in different systems. The Academy is trying to develop players who can drop into any system, for any team. It should also be noted that in the more advanced tactical teams the “defenders” are asked to move forward and score goals and everyone is asked to defend; “defenders” must learn to attack and “attackers” must learn to defend.

It is important to note that this system is for youth development purposes. This is not a professional senior squad so it is not a case where we are placing square pegs into round holes. These players are still in the early stages of their development and exposing them to a high possession, high risk style of play will put them into pressurized situations every time they are on the ball, forcing them to learn how to get out of difficult situations from a very early age.

Another way to look at it is that the system is the song sheet for the jazz band; it starts everyone on the same page but the players are encouraged to be creative and riff off of the basic construct.





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The Numbers





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The Roles



Offensive Role

- Support player, ability to maintain possession (always an option)
- Distribution (Correct choice – Short option preferable)
- Transition – recognizing moments to play forward quickly

Defensive Role

- Organization of defense
- Playing as a sweeper, providing cover and balance
- Starting positions in reference to the movement of the ball, pressure on the ball, athletic ability and movement of players
- Ability to close down player on breakaway, cut down shooting angles
- Range of the goalkeeper in the box to handle crosses and come off of the line

1

Goalkeeper

Technical Requirements:

- Shot stopping and ball handling – on the ground, below the waist, above the waist, diving, tip-overs, parrying
- Crosses – catching, boxing one and two handed, attacking the ball
- Distribution – throwing, bowling, passing, punting, drop kicking
- Break away – technical aspects
- Receiving





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The Roles



Offensive Role

- Provide an early outlet
- Establish width in attack
- Play as a flank player, wide midfielder or winger in attack; with the ball and without the ball – look to create 2v1 whenever possible
- Provide support behind the ball and beyond the ball
- Maintain team shape in the attack on the side of the ball and the far side
- Play the ball forward immediately upon winning the ball or run with the ball if unopposed
- Ability to switch roles with 7 and 11 respectively

2 + 3
Full Back

Defensive Role

- Deny penetration on the flanks
- Positional play depending on movement of the ball and players
- Mark opposing wide midfielder
- Pick up opposing forward when they drift into your space
- Provide cover and balance – staying compact
- Tracking and recovery runs
- Ability to adopt 4 and 5's role if required

Technical Requirements:

- Passing: Short, driven, lofted and front foot
- Receiving
- Finishing: Close range and distance
- Crossing: Short, flat, deep
- Dribbling to beat an opponent
- Running with the ball
- Heading
- Tackling





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The Roles



Offensive Role

- Receiving the ball on the ground and in the air
- Distribution of the ball: Safe , secure, progressive
- Support player – always a outlet
- Win the ball and play forward quickly
- Ability to help switch the point of attack
- Hold team shape
- Influence on set pieces
- Ability to switch roles with 6
- Move up to hold desired line of confrontation

Defensive Role

- Marking responsibilities
- Starting position in relation to the ball and movement of players
- Denying, containing and winning the ball
- Proper angles of recovery
- Denying space behind
- Providing cover and balance
- Ability to create density in the direct game channel
- Visual cues when to Intercept, spoil or contain
- Defending numbers up and down
- Hold at the line of confrontation

4 + 5

Center Half

Technical Requirements:

- Tackling
- Passing: Short, driven, lofted and front foot
- Receiving
- Long range finishing
- Running with the ball
- Shielding
- Heading
- Turning





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The Roles



Offensive Role

- Receiving the ball on the ground and in the air
- Distribution of the ball: Safe , secure, progressive
- Support player – always a outlet
- Win the ball and play forward quickly
- Ability to help switch the point of attack
- Hold team shape
- Ability to switch roles with 8 and 10

Defensive Role

- Organize the players: communication midfielders and forwards
- Provide cover to pressuring defensive players in midfield
- Provide balance in the midfield
- Act as a screen to deny breaking lines between 3 and 4 and 2 and 5
- Disrupt the attack
- Delay to attack playing numbers down in defense
- Recovery runs
- Winning the ball in the air and on the ground
- Ability to win 1v1 duels
- Ability to adopt roles 2, 3, 4 and 5

6

Holding Midfielder

Technical Requirements:

- Receiving the ball in the air and on the ground
- Turning in tight spaces
- Passing: Short, driven and lofted
- Long range finishing
- Ability to play 1 or 2 touch
- Execution of combination plays: 1-2, third man run, overlapping run
- Creating space: Triangle rotation, switch roles, Create space for another
- Dribbling
- Improvisation
- Shielding
- Tackling: Winning the ball
- Heading





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The Roles



Offensive Role

- Receiving the ball on the ground and in the air
- Distribution of the ball: Safe , secure, progressive
- Support player – playing between lines
- Win the ball and play forward quickly
- Ability to help switch the point of attack
- Ability to break into the box and finish
- Ability to switch roles with 10 and 9
- Creation and use of space

Defensive Role

- Connect with 10 when creating density in the middle of the park
- Provide balance in the midfield
- Connect with 9: high pressure if required
- Track runners from central midfield
- Recovery runs
- Winning the ball in the air and on the ground
- Ability to win 1v1 duels
- Ability to adopt role of 6

8

Box to Box Midfielder

Technical Requirements:

- Receiving the ball in the air and on the ground
- Turning in tight spaces
- Passing: Short, driven and lofted
- Ability to play 1 or 2 touch
- Execution of combination plays: 1-2, third man run, overlapping run
- Creating space: Triangle rotation, switch roles, Create space for another
- Close range and long range finishing
- Dribbling 1v1 in tight spaces
- Improvisation
- Tackling: Winning the ball





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The Roles



Offensive Role

- Receiving the ball on the ground
- Distribution of the ball: secure, progressive
- Support player – playing between lines
- Win the ball and play forward quickly and break lines
- Ability to help switch the point of attack
- Breaking into the box and finish
- Creation and use of space
- Play 1 or 2 touch
- Combination play to create numbers up
- Creativity in behind 9
- Ability to switch roles with 8 and 9

Defensive Role

- Connect with 8 when creating density in the middle of the park
- Provide balance in the midfield
- Connect with 9: high pressure if required
- Track runners from central midfield
- Recovery runs
- Ability to win 1v1 duels
- Ability to adopt role of 6

10

Attacking Midfielder

Technical Requirements:

- Receiving the ball in the air and on the ground
- Turning in tight spaces
- Passing: Short, driven and lofted
- Ability to play 1 or 2 touch
- Execution of combination plays: 1-2, third man run, overlapping run
- Creating space: Triangle rotation, switch roles, Create space for another
- Close range and long range finishing
- Dribbling 1v1 in tight spaces
- Improvisation and creativity





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The Roles



Offensive Role

- Receiving the ball on the ground and air
- Distribution of the ball: secure, progressive
- Ability to play on the entire flank
- Establish width in the attack
- Ability to penetrate with and without the ball
- Ability to serve the ball effectively from the flank
- Breaking into the box and finish
- Creation and use of space
- Combination play to create numbers up
- Becomes second center forward if ball is on the far side
- Ability to switch roles with 9 and either 7 or 11 respectively

Defensive Role

- Direct play wide
- The deeper the opposition travel with the ball the deep 7 and 11 drop
- Provide balance in the midfield
- Connect with 9: high pressure if required
- Track runners: opposition full backs
- Recovery runs
- Ability to win 1v1 duels
- Ability to adopt role of 2 and 3

7 + 11

Wide Forwards

Technical Requirements:

- Receiving the ball in the air and on the ground
- Speed dribbling in flank
- Passing: Short, driven and lofted
- Ability to cross the ball short, flat or deep
- Execution of combination plays: 1-2, third man run, overlapping run
- Creating space: Switch roles, create space for another
- Close range and long range finishing
- Dribbling 1v1
- Improvisation and creativity
- Lose defender in the box





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The Roles



Offensive Role

- Receiving the ball on the ground and air
- Show for the ball, secure the ball, shift defenders, slip others in, shoot
- Ability to create space in the box
- Establish depth in the attack
- Ability to penetrate with and without the ball
- Breaking into the box and finish
- Creation and use of space – run off the shoulder, peel and split, diagonal runs to flanks
- Combination play to create numbers up
- Ability to get shots away in a crowded box
- Ability to commit the goalkeeper and finish
- Ability to switch roles with 7, 11, 8 and 10

Defensive Role

- Direct play wide and in one direction
- Hold high line when defending
- Stay connected with 8 and 10
- Track runners: Set pieces
- Ability to win 1v1 duels
- Ability to adopt role of 8 and 10

9

Center Forward

Technical Requirements:

- Receiving the ball in the air and on the ground
- Speed dribbling 1v1
- Passing: breaking lines, maintain possession
- Ability to cross the ball short, flat or deep
- Execution of combination plays: 1-2, third man run, overlapping run
- Creating space: Switch roles, create space for another
- Close range and long range finishing
- Improvisation and creativity
- Lose defender in the box
- Ability to finish in a crowded box
- Ability to hit different areas of the target

