



Introduction to Sport, Fitness & Management

Sport: Youth football training

Commentary

Winchmore Hill Club has hosted Football First a community scheme for youth footballers since 2000. Andy Russell manages this programme and coaches both young and college aged footballers.

On screen text: Andy Russell Football Development Officer, Winchmore Hill Club

Andy Russell

It's absolutely vital for any youth player that may be developing into an elite performer to really focus on all the important aspects of maintaining a fit and healthy lifestyle. I think fitness is very very important for the modern performer because the games have quickened up.

Commentary

To prepare children for this quicker game Andy and his team have dropped the old fashioned, static stretching technique, in favour of a programme called dynamic flex warm-up. This is all about dynamic stretching and loosening up the muscles. The warm-up replicates movements that occur whilst playing football and minimises the risk of injury later on.

On screen text: Vaughn Youth Footballer

Vaughn

We do things like stretching our legs from the centre of our bodies to the side, or pretending to ice skate sideways or forwards and we also flick our heels.

Andy Russell

We've introduced them to foot skills, like the ladders work. We do different methods on that as well, not just ladders. You can use markers as well for that kind of thing.

On screen text: Sam Youth Footballer

Sam

It helps you build up your quick feet and quick arms and it helps you get up some speed in the matches.

Andy Russell

The ladders work really well developing their foot movements, foot patterns, trying to get their whole body movements correct, giving them the opportunity of trying to run correctly not too much in a session just what's right for children, keeping it fun.

Commentary

Although speed, agility, endurance, power and strength are all applied to youth and elite training, it's how these components are implemented, that separates the two levels.

Andy Russell

The main focus with young children that we put an emphasis on is more body movements, agility, speed and quickness...

Commentary

As they start moving into their twenties the focus changes to a footballer's level of fitness, stamina, endurance and strength.

Andy Russell

With regards to endurance building, interval running is a good way of developing that. That's allowing the performer to work in shorter bursts as opposed to the more traditional way of 'let's go out for a 4 mile run'.

Commentary

Andy is well versed in adapting coaching to suit all abilities.

Andy Russell

You will have seen that we've got 3 v 3 football matches going on as opposed to 6 v 6. At a low level ability it's better to have smaller numbers in your team because obviously you're going to get more touches of the ball

Commentary

Although the level of fitness training differs between an elite and youth performer, the nutritional advice they both receive is very similar: Carbohydrates are at the top of the nutritional list.

On screen text: Diane Moore Parent

Diane

I try to give them something that have quite a lot of carbohydrate in it, a bit of roughage, some fruit if possible, something like a banana and certainly the older one is much more aware of 5 a day and all that kind of thing and he will gladly eat kind of a whole array of fruits, I have a bit more of a struggle with the 7 year old.

Commentary

Andy and his team also encourage the children to re hydrate regularly. Instilling this habit now helps children to develop a routine in the future.

Andy Russell

It's very important that they take the right fluids, not fizzy drinks. When we're running our football camps we always insist on water because that is the best thing for them when they're involved in a football activity. There are obviously a lot of energy drinks now that have got some flavour attached to them.

Commentary

With so many energy drinks on offer it's the percentage of carbohydrate that differentiates one from the other: A hypotonic drink contains less than 4%, an isotonic drink has 4-8% and a hypertonic drink has more than 8%. A high percentage of carbohydrate can limit fluid absorption so isotonic drinks best provide both rehydration and energy.

Commentary

When coaching children in football it is imperative that health, safety and welfare standards are met. One solution is to make sure that each youth player signs a register before they begin their training.

On screen text: Anna Russell Football Youth Secretary, Winchmore Hill Club

Anna Russell

The importance of every child being registered is that they're covered with our liability insurers. Once they're on our register, God forbid there's an accident then they're covered with our liability insurance, if they're not then I'm afraid they're not covered.

Commentary

Another requirement is making sure that all the coaches are qualified and know how to work with children: They understand how to do warm-ups and exercises as well as educating the children in how to play safely.

On screen text: Ahmed Aourah First Coach, Winchmore Hill Club

Ahmed Aourah

My first qualification was with the London FA, level 1. I started that nearly two years ago now and now I'm on level 2.

Anna Russell

We have to follow the FA code of conduct, we got to make sure that each coach attends the level 1 courses and when you attend the level 1 courses, part of that, you have to do a three-hour course of the child protection.

Commentary

Coaches in community football play an important role, but they are not always paid. So volunteers are needed but they can be tricky to find.

Anna Russell

When it comes to these guys doing the work voluntarily, you have to get your CRB checked, you know you have to go down to the police station, you have to pay your fee towards getting yourself checked, so yes there is a lot of paperwork involved and a lot of them, because they are young and they're still students, they avoid that, they just haven't got the time to do that.

Sam

My dream is to become the world's best footballer. It's very important for me to be fit and healthy. I don't want to be fat because otherwise I won't be able to play football and I won't be able to fulfil my dream.

Ahmed Aourah

So far they are at a very young age. Whether they will make it to the top we wait and see.