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Comparison of the three national coaching methods and their effectiveness to coaching competitive soccer

Rolando Uribe

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COMPARISON OF THE THREE NATIONAL COACHING METHODS
AND THEIR EFFECTIVENESS TO COACHING
COMPETITIVE SOCCER

A Project
Presented to the
Faculty of
California State University,
San Bernardino

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Arts
In
Education:
Kinesiology

by
Rolando Uribe
June 2006
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Approved by:

Clifford Singh, First Reader
Shannon Siegel, Second Reader

06/13/06 Date
ABSTRACT

Three general coaching methods have been developed to help and increase the effectiveness of coaches through appropriate training sessions and game analysis. The three national organizations, American Youth Soccer Association (AYSO), National Soccer Coaches Association of America (NSCAA), and United States Soccer Federation (USSF), offer various different coaching courses and strategies to coaches who want to be certified or earn a national coaching license. The nature and purpose of these associations is to educate, provide services, and promote and stimulate interest in the game of soccer. The purpose of this project is to compare and contrast the three national teaching/training programs. These programs will develop an overall understanding and knowledge of the game through a progression of a warm-up, fundamental phase, game related phase, game like condition phase, and cool down. This is the general teaching and training progression for most soccer training sessions.

The overall findings of the project found differences among the three national associations. The findings showed that in terms of soccer instructions/coaching and teaching, the AYSO program was simple to follow. The NSCAA program
was ranked second as the course is more user-friendly since the coaches are not scored by their playing and demonstrating abilities. The USSF program was ranked as the most difficult because it was intensive, both in classroom knowledge/instruction, and practical field coaching sessions.
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Thank you to the all the coaches and instructors that helped me collect all the research and information to complete this project; thanks as well to the players and teams that allowed me to use these techniques and methods of training. Special thanks goes to Dr. Clifford Singh, my first reader, for his support and guidance and Dr. Shannon Siegel, my second reader, for her patience and support through this process of growth. This project would have never been possible without all the information gained from youth coaches and the various coaching clinics that enhanced my vision of the ideal training method for soccer teams and players.
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Jean Paul Sartre, the French philosopher, stated that the course of a soccer game is an exciting event with constant change of play taking place between freedom and restriction, spontaneity and planning, individuality and group dynamics, and options and power. Sartre’s analysis of a soccer game is appropriate and relevant when considering the complexity of the game and the simplicity of the execution (Bangso and Peitersen, 2000). Skill, in soccer terms, is the ability to be in the right place at the right time and to select the correct technique. In addition, soccer is a game of judgement. In a 90-minute game of soccer the ball is in play for approximately 60 of those minutes, for the remainder of the time the ball is out of play. Out of the 60 minutes in-play, each team, in an even game, will have possession of the ball for 30 minutes. During the time in which the ball is in play, the ball will frequently be in flight and outside the playing distance of any of the 22 players. An individual player in a team, on average, will have possession of the ball for more than two minutes. The players for the other 58 minutes are making
judgements, decisions, and selections of movements. Soccer is the most fluid of all games. All the players and the ball can move through 360 degrees, and there is a minimum number of laws and relatively few stoppages. Situations change rapidly, requiring from the players a high degree of mental alertness and concentration. All of which brings one back to the fundamental question, how does one coach and how does a player learn? To be successful, soccer coaches must have a plan or, at the very least, soccer must have a method of instruction or teaching progression that coaches can follow. All serious soccer playing countries have an academy or training center and a certification program to standardize technical and instructional proficiency. Soccer, or football as it is called in the rest of the world, is a game of skill, imagination, creativity and decision making. The game should be played attractively as well as effectively. Coaching should not stifle, but rather enhance those elements. The beauty of the game is in its simplicity. Simplicity is genius! Keep the game simple. The task of a coach is twofold: to get the best out of the players as individuals and as a team; and to ensure that the sum of the whole exceeds the sum of
all its separate parts - how to coach techniques, how to develop skills and how to coach and combine the understanding and skills of all the players - team chemistry and concept.

Purpose of the Project

The purpose of this project was to compare and contrast the three national soccer coaching methods. This will enable coaches to identify which associations best fit their experience, needs, and knowledge of the game. Coaches who attend these courses will help players achieve the highest levels of skills and performance. Preparing players by training them with the appropriate program that best fits their needs is beneficial for their overall performance.

Description of the Project

This project consisted of developing specific soccer teaching and training regimens to assist the coaches in the fundamentals of a progressive teaching and training program to ensure proper techniques and tactics necessary for the game skills execution. The instructional methods of soccer teaching and training have evolved in the last several
years. New techniques and strategies have been developed by coaching associations. The United States coaching associations fall under three national bodies: American Youth Soccer Association (AYSO), National Soccer Coaches Association of America (NSCAA), and United States Soccer Federation (USSF). These organizations have different approaches in their way of teaching and training methods.

The development of a progressive teaching and training program that is specific to the sport of soccer has enhanced the ability of coaches who train the players to reach their performance objectives during various training sessions and to meet the physical demands of the game.

This project is intended to enhance and boost coaches' knowledge, tactics and strategies related to the competitive game. In addition, the project will also provide coaches with special techniques and training methods to increase their developing players awareness, performance, and decision making processes.

Significance of the Project

This project is significant to the game of soccer and to the individuals who dedicate themselves to coaching players of various ages, skill levels and the physical
demands. This project summarizes and highlights the various coaching methods developed by the three organizations. It also summarizes and highlights the most important concepts and their effectiveness in the game situation. This project will provide a basic foundation for coaches to maximize their full potential, i.e., instructional and practical applications to coach the game. The game of soccer has increased the level of foot, eye and hand coordination of the players. Nevertheless, the origin of soccer in the United States (U.S.) was popularized with college and public school students, similar to other countries in the world. The game in the U.S. has graduated to a professional level called the Major League Soccer (MLS). Progress is being made through the efforts of prominent soccer coaching organizations and these include the AYSO, NSCAA, and USSF. The function of each organization will vary, but the universal objectives will include the following:

1. Development of programs
2. Conduct coaching clinics for players and coaches
3. Organize conferences
4. Provide leadership and organization
5. Promote the sport for all age groups in the United States

6. Certify coaches and grade them according to their knowledge and abilities

Most of the content in the coaching methods enable the coaches to observe and identify, and then correct the technical and tactical demands of the game (USSF, 2001). In two of the three national associations, the coaching courses are one week long and require the coaches to pass various examinations. AYSO courses are structured more to parents that lack the basic knowledge to serve as a coach (AYSO, 1998). The purpose of the course is to generate more awareness within the coaching community to draw from the individual's experiences and combine it with a basic knowledge of coaching functions. The techniques that are being used are soccer specific to fundamental skills taught and rehearsed, ground contact exercises, partner enhanced exercises for the competitive nature of sport, and contact exercises for a more game-like setting.

Limitations of the Project

The following limitations apply to this project:

1. The coaching programs will not be able to measure
4. **Blindside Run** - a run by an attacker on the side of the ball opposite the defender.

5. **Centering** - passing the ball from one side of the field into the center, near the goal.

6. **Closing Down** - advancing toward opponents to restrict the space between opponents.

7. **Compactness** - the ability of the players to deny the space the opponents play through by moving as a unit based upon the movement of the ball and attacking players.

8. **Cover** - the ability to provide defensive help by players around the ball.

9. **Defender** - primarily a defensive player who assists the goalkeeper in protecting the goal area.

10. **Depth** - positioning that sustains proper support for attackers or defenders.

11. **Diagonal Run** - a run made diagonally across the field.

12. **Disguise Run** - an attempt to unbalance and trick the defensive player and place him/her out of position.

13. **Economical Training** - the combing of as many of components of coaching as possible into one exercise.

14. **Forward** - an attacking player whose responsibility is
to create and score goals.

15. **Goalkeeper** - the last line of defense; this is the only player who can use his/her hands within the field of play.

16. **Midfielder** - both an offensive and defensive player who is primarily responsible for linking the forwards and defenders.

17. **Mobility** - the ability of the players to unbalance the defense by making runs that create space and pull apart the compactness of the defensive organization, to allow the attacking team space and time to play.

18. **Overlap** - a run made by a supporting player who moves from a position behind a teammate to a position ahead of that teammates.

19. **Penetration** - the focus of the player on the ball to play the ball behind the defender or defense by passing, shooting or dribbling.

20. **Pressure** - the ability of the player to deny penetration by the opposing player either through passing, shooting, or dribbling, making the game predictable.

21. **Principles of Play** - are the rules of action
(guidelines) that support the basic objectives of soccer.

22. Psychology - the science of mind and behavior, the mental and behavioral aspect of individuals and groups.

23. Tactics - the means by which the principles or rules are executed.

24. S.A.I.D. Principle - Specific Adaptations to Imposed Demands - type of demands placed on the body will determine the type of adaptation that were occur, the training program should be specific to the individual’s ultimate goals.

25. Set Piece - a predetermined tactical move used in attack.

26. Shadow Play - a coaching technique used by coaches to reinforce some general patterns of play by groups within the team or to coordinate the movements of the whole team.

27. Speed of Play - exhibited on both the attacking and defending side of the game and requires that players, through their training and experience, are able to read the game, assess what is demanded by the game at that particular time, and influence the outcome by the
application of the afore mentioned aspects.

28. **Square Pass** - a pass made parallel to a goal-line.

29. **Strategy** - the decision of which tactics are to be used, the arrangement of players, and/or the overall game plan.

30. **Support** - the ability of the players around the ball to position themselves to provide passing options for the player on the ball to achieve penetration or to maintain possession of the ball.

31. **Systems of Play** - the deployment of the field players on the soccer field.

32. **Tackle** - an attempt the win the ball.

33. **Technical Functional Training** - training that isolates one aspect of an individual’s function within the team.

34. **Transition** - the speed at which a player is able to transfer from one role in the game to another.
   (i.e. offense to defense)

35. **Vision** - the ability of a player to see what is taking place in both the immediate vicinity of the ball and away from the ball.
Soccer instructions were originally, developed by parents and volunteers and this was addressed by the AYSO program. As player's abilities increased so did the demand for better instructional information and for better coaches. Their initial needs were met by the NSCAA Diploma programs. As soccer increased in complexity, a whole new fraternity was developed to meet the increased demands of the modern game. As players graduated from local high schools and clubs into the collegiate and national ranks, their demands were met by the rigorous USSF National certification programs.

In the early stages of the coaching schools, youth coaches were taught progression in their training sessions. This placed players in an environment in which they were receiving a lot of repetition without initial pressure. Pressure was then added progressively, judging by the success rate of the individuals. Most coaches still organize technical training based on this format. What is the coach's responsibility to training techniques? A coach should give players tools with which to practice
on their own, repetitively put players in a pressured environment in training sessions, and emphasize the important coaching points during the game (Wedemeyer, 2003).

The concept of having players perform meaningful technical and/or tactical game related skills in areas of the field where they are comfortable is practical. Combining it all in such a way that coaches and players can start or structure practice at any stage is something that takes time and good coaching skills. Technical perfection is a defining characteristic of every top team. Every player is capable of executing even the most difficult techniques at top speed, under opposition pressure, and in the tightest spaces. The only way to achieve this kind of perfection is with a systematic technical program designed with the challenges of today's soccer in mind (Bassemir, 2003). National youth team players in the Norwegian Soccer Association are expected to learn certain individual skills, fast accurate passing, confident ball control with special emphasis placed on first touch, high speed dribbling combined with fakes, shooting and heading techniques with decisive finishes and first touches, zone
defense for defenders and basic goalkeeper skills (attack and defense) (Pabst and Rossen, 2003).

Technique is the mechanics behind solving a problem and skill is being able to solve the problems regardless of the mechanics (Wedemeyer, 2003). When a team has the ball, all players attack. When the ball is lost, all players defend. This is how modern soccer is played. The game needs all-around players; the game needs fully developed players, not players who are only defenders or attackers (Maher, 2005).

In addition, the last thing players on the Women’s National team saw before they left the locker room was a sign that read, “Play Hard, Play To Win, Have Fun”, (DiCicco, 2002). The physiological, technical and internal motivation are key components for competitive soccer. Coaching as defined by most experts in the field consists of four major areas of consideration: technical training, tactical training, fitness training and mental preparation (Schum, 2005). Most of the information in this area of study is qualitative. The focus is in three main areas, the individual player, group work and team concept. Coaching methods are developed by the three coaching
schools to increase knowledge and practical instruction related to the game.

According to Barnes and Oliver (2003), players may quit soccer for several reasons. Among these reasons are the ideas that soccer is no longer fun, soccer is no longer interesting, I'm not learning anything new, and my coach does not teach skills. The transition away from participation in soccer may also be related in some way to how our youth soccer programs are structured.

A number of articles in recent soccer professional research journals addresses the physiological and performance profiles. Some of the research looks at size, maturity status, maximum oxygen consumption, and anaerobic threshold, carbohydrate loading, supplementation, and injuries (Kirkendall, 2003). In general these studies show that soccer players are well conditioned physiologically and psychologically to meet the increased demands of the game. In addition, there is a need to address the techniques and methods of instruction which make the game more creative and dynamic.

The goals of the three national coaching methods are to develop youth national teams, and advance the
instructional programs to meet the demands of global competition, including the World Cup.
CHAPTER THREE

COMPARISON OF THE THREE NATIONAL COACHING METHODS

The three National Associations compared in this project are the following: AYSO, NSCAA, and USSF. These three major organizations deal with the essentials of the coaching methodology. The main concept of this project is to identify any similarities and differences in teaching and training methods. The specifics of each methodology will be explained and what level of coaching it will fulfill.

AYSO was founded in Torrance, California in September 1964 (AYSO, 2004). This organization’s philosophies are taught in a 15 hour clinic which emphasizes the well-being of all participants. There are five major principles that the organization is guided towards:

1. Every player plays at least half of the game
2. Balanced teams
3. Open registration
4. Positive coaching
5. Good sportsmanship  (AYSO, 2004)

The philosophy and structure of AYSO were created to provide honest competition in which the players are more
important than winning records. With this in mind, the basics are still taught through the learning of the Laws of the Game. Another important concept in the methodology of AYSO is the qualities of the coach, style of coaching, ability of the coach, and execution. The coaching cycle is another essential part in the methodology used in the AYSO approach (Figure 1).

Figure 1. Coaching Cycle.
This process is to develop players with these six procedures:

1. Match characteristics
2. Elements of practice
3. Match pressure
4. Build-up to match conditions
5. Teaching and coaching techniques
6. Maximizing coaching opportunities

The challenge for the youth coaches is to put principles of play into terms that kids understand (AYSO, 1998). The players should be given objectives and goals in their training sessions. This will make it easier for the players to understand the rules of the game and be more successful.

Systems of play have a long history in the formation of the players on the field. AYSO identifies the following systems of play:

1. 2-3-5 (2-defenders, 3-midfielders, & 5-forwards)
2. 3-4-3 (3-defenders, 4-midfielders, & 3-forwards)
3. 3-3-4 (3-defenders, 3-midfielders, & 4-forwards)
4. 4-2-4 (4-defenders, 2-midfielders, & 4-forwards)
5. 4-3-3 (4-defenders, 3-midfielders, & 3-forwards)
Another critical aspect in the methodology covered in the AYSO process is the psychological motivation. The process includes the following motivation techniques:

1. Positive reinforcement
2. Do not criticize
3. Encourage players to have a positive attitude toward other players
4. Ask the players for their opinions
5. Use good players to help assist teammates
6. Avoid favoritism
7. Set specific standards and goals for individuals, groups, and the team

There is a brief summary in the area of injury and prevention and first aid. The technical topics covered in the AYSO coaching course are as follows:

1. Ball control (trapping)
2. Dribbling
3. Passing
4. Shooting
5. Heading
6. Tackling

The next set of topics cover the special areas within the
The key element in the AYSO program is for players to have fun, and for coaches who volunteer their time to expand their knowledge.

The NSCAA was established in 1941 by a small group of college coaches (NSCAA, 1999). The NSCAA has grown to include all levels of men's and women's soccer, including youth, high school, junior college and professional coaches, as well as referees, administrators, and other individuals interested in the growth of soccer in the United States. Currently the NSCAA, with over 15,000 members, is the largest single-sport coaching association in the United States (NSCAA, 2000). With this in mind, the NSCAA Coaching Academy Program was established to further coaching methodology and to meet the growing needs of their
membership to learn more about the game of soccer. The philosophical foundation for all levels is to improve the development of soccer by creating a learning environment which will enhance the individual’s experience and enjoyment of the game.

The NSCAA Coaching Academy has three different levels:

1. National Diploma Course
2. Advanced National Diploma Course
3. Premier Diploma Course

These courses are 50 hours long and address theory and practical topics, and include 6 hours of testing. The courses are designed for two different levels of players. The National and Advanced National Diploma courses are designed for coaches of senior and advanced senior players. The Premier course is the pinnacle of the academy program and is designed for the very best coaches working with elite players (NSCAA, 2000). The methodology of the NSCAA National Diploma course includes the theory topics of the following areas:

1. Coaching
2. Components of Soccer Coaching
3. Economical Training

4. Specificity of Training (The SAID Principle)

The teaching process at this level emphasizes coaching as a “craft” (NSCAA, 1999), and the creation of an environment for learning. The training session must include an outline, a topic, organization of equipment, the warm-up, technical or tactical progression, a concluding activity, and a cool down. The technical topics covered in the NSCAA National Diploma are as follows:

1. Dribbling
2. Tackling
3. Receiving balls on the ground
4. Receiving balls in the air
5. Passing
6. Goalkeeping
7. Shooting
8. Crossing
9. Heading
10. Fitness
11. Long Passing

The tactical topics are also taught, but only in very small numbers and small groups. The 6 v.6 dynamic model for
teaching is the focus. As a system of play must be designed to meet the needs and playing characteristics of the players, this curriculum must be a malleable entity that can be flexed and molded to the present needs of the American coach (NSCAA, 1999). The NSCAA National Diploma Course grading scale covers five different areas of testing:

1. Field Practice Session I
2. Field Practice Session II
3. Laws of the Games Exam
4. Oral Exam
5. Final Field Exam

The on-field practical coaching assessment covers the two basic areas of organizational and instructional components (Figure 2).
### NSCAA Coaching Academy
National & Advanced National Course Practical Coaching Assessment Form

| Name: ____________________________ | Site: ____________________________ |
| Date: ____________________________ | Date: ____________________________ |

#### Organizational Components

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CRITERIA:</th>
<th>ASSESSMENT:</th>
<th>COMMENTS:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Coaching Outline: Clear and concise plan reflects topic assigned?</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coaching Demeanor: Appearance / Professionalism / Enthusiasm</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coaching Set Up: Equipment and Accessories</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Utilization of Space and Players: Correct size and numbers for activities and personnel</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coaching Exercises: Relative to Topic and Progressive</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Organizational Total = **

#### Instructional Components

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CRITERIA:</th>
<th>ASSESSMENT:</th>
<th>COMMENTS:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ability to Communicate: Coach articulates quality coaching points clearly &amp; concisely</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ability to Demonstrate: Coach paints a clear and concise picture</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ability to Identify &amp; Correct Problems: Coach stops, restarts &amp; corrects play appropriately</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knowledge of the Game: Coach demonstrates an understanding of the nuances of the game</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ability to Inspire / Improve Players: Coach made practice enjoyable &amp; learning took place</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Instructional Total x 2 = ** **Grand Total = **

#### Key Comments:
________________________________________________________________________________________

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Figure 2. National Soccer Coaches Association of America Coaching Assessment Form.
The NSCAA Advanced National Diploma is an opportunity for colleagues within the association to train good coaches of senior players to be better coaches of senior players. The course focuses almost exclusively on the improvement of training. Its context is the coaching school, a cooperative group context (NSCAA, 1999). The NSCAA Advanced National Diploma builds on concepts covered in the other coaching courses, particularly the NSCAA National Diploma. The essence of this course is live involvement and live observation in a group which is similar in some respects to a team. The course is guided in two aspects:

1. To help the coaches think clearly about soccer in a way that will support their ability to train advanced players

2. To actively guide the coaches to an improved coaching performance

This is a training methods course. The goal is to examine the ingredients of excellent training sessions, determine which of these ingredients the coach provides, and then cultivate the habit of providing these ingredients consistently. These ingredients are divided into two parts, organization and leadership. The advanced coach takes
complete command of the training environment. This environment is controlled by putting the players into immediate action, and is characterized by action punctuated by occasional interventions, and the appropriate timing of intervening. Another big part of this course is the observation skill of the coaches. Observation requires coaches to look at not only the general performance of the group, but also the specific performance of the individual. The NSCAA Advanced National Diploma focuses more on the technical functional training methods. The designing a functional training session includes: targets, key factors, location, players, progression, types of targets, and organization. Another form of a training method is shadow play. This method normally is conducted with no opposition, or sometimes partial or passive opposition, e.g., passive opposing forwards or midfielders, but live defenders. The benefits of shadow play are used to imprint a style of play and establish a good passing rhythm. The course provides numerous hours of theory on the tactical functions of forwards, midfielders, defenders and goalkeepers. This concept breaks down by dividing the field into thirds (Figure 3).
Figure 3. Thirds of the Field.

The first section is called the defending third, the second is the middle third, and the last is the attacking third.

With the NSCAA Advanced National Diploma, the coaches
will be tested in four areas of competence: field methodological assessment, oral examination, match analysis, and half-time analysis.

The NSCAA Premier course is largely designed to help coaches examine 11 v. 11 soccer by exploring systems of play, and conducting full-sided field practices and sessions which include large numbers of players training functionally (NSCAA, 2000). The ability for coaches to analyze the 11 v. 11 game is probably the most important talent a soccer coach must develop. Soccer coaches find it easier to practice drills and small group games than to coordinate practices where large numbers of players are training functionally in large areas of the field. The course will explain and describe the advantages and disadvantages of using certain systems of play. The NSCAA Premier course covers the 4-3-3, 3-4-3, 4-4-2, and 3-5-2, systems of play. Coaches are examined in the following areas of field methodological assessment, oral examination, match analysis, and half-time analysis.

The USSF National Coaching programs are rigorous week-long coaching courses that require many hours of preparation, both physical and mental, and readings of the
Laws of the Game and other aspects. The USSF National Coaching programs are divided into three certificate categories, USSF "A", "B", and "C". The first level of coaching program is the National "C" course which includes over 60 hours in theory and practical topics. The emphasis of the "C" License is to enable the coach to perform in the following areas:

1. Observe and identify, then correct and/or reinforce the technical and tactical demands of the game
2. Develop and implement appropriate training sessions
3. Better understand the responsibilities of coaching
4. Aid in acquiring the basic coaching foundation should a coach wish to pursue the higher levels of USSF National Licensing programs

The course begins with a theory lecture that covers the following areas:

1. Teacher/coach
2. How to teach
3. Components of soccer
4. Economical training
5. Specificity of training

According to the curriculum, the training should be well
organized, and have defined goals, objectives, and rules. The proper progression is from simple to complex and general to specific. The progression process is different between technical and tactical components (Figure 4). The tactical progression begins with the individual, then moves to small groups and finishes with team concepts. The technical progression, on the other hand, starts in the fundamental phase, then goes to game-related phase and ends with game condition phase. Also, the game of soccer is broken down into components of the game. Technique, tactics, fitness (physical), and psychological components are addressed in the "C" level certification process. Besides these components, there are two areas that are very important to the methodology in this course. The aspects of economical training and the S.A.I.D. principle are effective ways to improve player development through proper planning. Developing a philosophy is vital in the effectiveness of the players with whom coaches are dealing, as is having realistic expectations of the players. Also, the philosophy must be age appropriate and take into account the players' physical and psychological maturity. In the National "C" license, a theory topic covers the
importance of care and prevention of injuries.

Figure 4. Teaching Progressions.
In this section, the laws of the game are explained as well. Game analysis is a lecture that covers match observation and team teaching, and is designed to assist coaches in observing and analyzing their team's performance. The combination of all three sessions should enhance the coaches' abilities to observe, evaluate and design a meaningful training session. The tactics lecture covers the principles of defense and attack. The principles of defense include, delay (pressure), depth (cover), balance, and concentration (compactness). Penetration, depth (support), mobility, width, and finishing are the principles of attack that are addressed. The second part of the tactics lecture covers systems of play. This lecture is designed to assist coaches in identifying the strengths and weaknesses of their players and selecting a system or formation from which the team will generally operate. Along with the theory lectures, this course also teaches the coaches technical topics. The technical topics are as follows:

a. Fitness with the ball

b. Individual Skill and Dribbling

c. Passing
d. Receiving  
e. Goalkeeping  
f. Finishing  
g. Heading and Crossing  
The National "C" also teaches team practical tactical sessions. The six team tactical sessions covered are:

1. Possession  
2. Penetration  
3. 8 v. 8 Defending  
4. 8 v. 8 Attacking  
5. Defending Restarts  
6. Attacking Restarts  

The grading scale of the National "C" and "B" use the examinations of the following subjects:

1. Practice (Playing & Demonstration Ability)  
2. Tactics (Oral)  
3. Methods of coaching (Oral)  
4. Team Management (Written)  
5. Laws of the game (Written)  
6. Anatomy & Physiology (Written)  
7. Practical coaching - tactics (Field)  
8. Practical coaching - technique (Field)
These exams are given a score, a total is given, and the coaches must score a certain number to pass the course (Figure 5).

**SUBJECT: 3.5 RULE FOR “C” AND “B” COURSES**

The 3.5 Rule has been designed for the purpose of determining which candidates are qualified at this time to continue to the next level of licensing.

In order to continue to the next level of coaching license the following applies: a candidate must score a 3.5 average or less in the five (5) specified categories; tactics, methods, playing ability and practical coaching of tactics and technique (the practical coaching subjects are weighted double). A candidate does receive scores in anatomy/physiology, care/prevention, laws and team management, however these scores are not included in the averaging. Candidates must also pass these tests in order to pass the course.

Should a candidate score above the 3.5 average and still pass the course, he/she is awarded the license. However, in order to continue to the next level course, the candidate has two options, 1) retake the course to better his average or 2) after two years of practical coaching the candidate may continue to the next level.

(SEE FOLLOWING FOR EXAMPLE)

**EXAMINATION SUBJECTS**

I. **PRACTICE**
   a. Playing and Demonstration Ability. 4 4

II. **THEORY**
   a. Tactics (oral) 3 3
   b. Methods of Coaching (oral) 4 4
   c. Team Management (written) 2 2
   d. Laws of the Game (written) 2 2
   e. Anatomy & Phy./Ex. Phy. (written) 1 1

III. **METHODOLOGY**
   a. Practical Coaching (Tactics) 4 8
   b. Practical Coaching (Technique) 4 8

**TOTAL = 27 / 7**
Average for 3.5 Rule: 3.8
Figure 5. United States Soccer Federation "B & "C" Grading Scale.

The National "B" course emphasizes the first three objectives of the "C" course, but also has the following components:

1. Distinguish between technical functions and tactical functions and organize appropriate training sessions for individuals, group, and team situations
2. Pursue the higher level of USSF National Licensing Program

The National "B" course is a 60 hour course, including various theory and practical topics. The topics in the theory sections cover a vast amount of information of these subjects:

1. Philosophy and considerations
2. What is coaching?
3. Components of soccer
4. Economical training
5. Specificity of training
6. How to teach
7. Philosophy and considerations
8. What is coaching?
9. Components of soccer

10. Economical training

11. Specificity of training

12. How to teach

The second part of the theory lectures covers the area of game analysis. The game analysis lecture is broken down into two parts. The first part of game analysis is the general format for analysis of opponents. This analysis includes, team structure, attacking tendencies, defending tendencies, and assessing strengths and weaknesses. The analysis of a team varies quite a bit from that of the opponent. The components for the analysis of a team are the following:

1. Attitude
2. Fitness
3. First Attacker
4. Second Attacker
5. Third Attacker
6. Group play (Attack)
7. Team play (Attack)
8. Finishing
9. First defender
10. Second defender
11. Third defender
12. Group play (Defending)
13. Team play (Defending)

In the "B" level licensing there is also a discussion about the laws of the game, and human anatomy and physiology. This course covers in detail the importance of the coach's knowledge of exercise physiology. Another part of the theory lectures covers the areas of tactical functions by positions on both sides of the fields. Although this concludes the theory topics, the practical technical topics are next addressed on the field. The practical technical topics on the field are as follows:

1. Fitness with the ball
2. Dribbling and tackling
3. Passing and receiving
4. Finishing
5. Goalkeeping
6. Heading and crossing

Along with the technical topics, the course covers the following tactical field topics:

1. Rhythm of play (Change point of attack)
2. Training the playmaker
3. Midfield defending
4. Playing out of the back
5. Playing from the middle third to the final third
6. 8 v. 8, 11 v. 11 (Defending)
7. 8 v. 8, 11 v. 11 (Attacking)
8. Defending restarts (Set piece)
9. Attacking restarts (Set piece)

The grading scale is very similar of that in the National "C" course.

The final coaching course in the USSF is the National "A" course. This course is 60 hours long with theory and practical topics, and is the most rigorous of the three programs. This course is intended for those coaches who work with the elite players in the country. The objectives of the "A" course are:

1. To better understand the responsibilities of coaching at the advanced levels of the game.
2. To increase the coach's depth of knowledge and ability to teach using the knowledge from this course and the information gained through other coaching curriculums.
3. To expand the coach’s ability to analyze games, and based upon the components of the game, prepare his/her team to meet the demands of the games as produced by a particular opponent.

4. To expand the coach’s ability to analyze the game and make appropriate adjustments during the game.

The theory lecture is in conjunction with the match analysis and model training session, which is designed to assist coaches in improving their ability to identify problems within the game and then create meaningful training sessions that address those problems. The combination of these sessions will enhance the coaches’ ability to observe the game, evaluate individual and team performance, construct appropriate training sessions to educate their players, and finally, to assess the effect training has had on the players (USSF, 2000). The first area of lecture covers the following topics:

1. The game as teacher
2. Cycle of development
3. Soccer difficulties
4. Identifying problems in the game
5. Defending
6. Attacking
7. Transition
8. Translating to training

The basis of coaching is observation. In this part of the "A" level certificate process, the coach's ability to articulate the events or the actions seen in a game and re-create those situations in training requires the coach to have a keen sense of observation and a good memory (USSF, 2000). Learning to coach can be divided into five different phases, knowledge and understanding of the game, reading the game, determining objectives, setting priorities, and planning. The relationship between technique and skill is important to consider in the development of component players. Players who are technical must be able to apply those skills within the game, while under the pressure of time, space, and opponents. Successful application of technique while under pressure is referred to as skillful performance. The progression of technique is similar to the previous courses, but at the National "A", emphasis is on technical/tactical functional training. Tactics are defined as players decisions within the game. Instant
decisions are constantly being made concerning which
technique to use to solve a problem, how fast a player is
closing down an opponent in order to make the game more
predictable, or on the timing of a run to receive the ball
behind the defense. Tactics can also include a game plan
to provide the players with a specific plan of action
designed to achieve a desired result, or to enhance the
personalities of the players on the field to give them the
greatest opportunity to succeed. Within these concepts are
the principles of attacking and defending. To address
tactical situations in the game, the teaching of tactics
has to reflect the game throughout the teaching
progression. The game demands that the coaching of tactics
for individual, group, and team are also governed by the
principles of play, safety/risk factors and playing through
the thirds of the field. The defensive principles of play
are addressed, immediate chase, pressure, cover, balance,
and compactness. Since soccer is a free flowing sport,
players are constantly forced to make decisions regarding
maintaining possession of the ball. The attacking
principles are characterized as penetration, support,
mobility, and creating width and length. Other concepts
that the coaches must recognize and teach are the concepts of speed of play, transition and vision of the field. The tactical theory topics emphasize more of the team concepts. These concepts include the areas of high pressure and pressuring defensively, speed of play, low pressure, counter attacking, zonal defending, offside (attacking), and offside (defending).

Sports Psychology is motivation through communication. A huge challenge for a coach is to translate a player or team’s potential into consistent performance. A large part of a coach’s responsibility is to clarify and understand the team’s needs, the needs of the players, and the demands of soccer and then, somehow, to reconcile and dovetail all three (USSF, 2000). The role of the coach can be divided into four fundamental categories of skills, technical, tactical, managerial, and interpersonal. The game of soccer is a very complex one which requires the coach to have many roles, he/she must be an organizer, motivator, mentor, and friend to be effective.

The National “A” covers many aspects of fitness, physiology of exercise and nutrition, and a very brief lecture on systems of play. The main concepts of the “A”
course are the topics on the field. The practical technical/tactical functional training topics are as follows; training for finishing, goalkeepers, defenders, midfielders, and forwards; pressuring, speed of play, low pressure defending, shape of team, counter attack, zonal defending, offside tactics (defending), offside tactics (attacking), and set pieces.

The National "A" program grading scale is very complex, the coaches are put through rigorous exams and must pass each section with a passing score to obtain the "A" license. The coaches must pass the following examinations:

1. Laws of the game (Written)
2. Physiology of exercise (Written)
3. Psychology/Team Management (Written)
4. Game analysis (Observation)
5. Methods (Oral)
6. Tactics (Oral)
7. Coaching Topic (Field)
8. Playing and Demonstration Ability (Field)

The comparison of these associations was done through the instructor's manuals that each lead instructor is given
to teach the different courses within their perspective associations.
CHAPTER FOUR

CONCLUSION

This comparison was completed between the AYSO, NSCAA and USSF methods of teaching and training coaches to better prepare their perspective players and teams. There were many similarities between the three associations:

1. Terminology
2. Structure of course
3. Technical progression
4. Laws of the game
5. Technical skills taught
6. Principles of play
7. Coaching cycle
8. Systems of play
9. Set pieces
10. Psychological Motivation

The topics mentioned above were discussed in all three associations, some in more detail than in other. The two most similar associations were the NSCAA and USSF, in that both organizations were more suited for coaches with more experience who deal with more competitive players. Both of these organizations had three different levels of courses
that progressed from one to the other.

The differences between the associations are as follows:

1. Cost
2. Duration of the course
3. Age appropriate and skill level of players
4. Knowledge of the game require by the coaches attending
5. Playing and demonstration ability of coaches
6. Examinations
7. Physicals required prior to attend course
8. Methodology of instruction
9. Physiology of exercise
10. Sports Psychology
11. Nutrition
12. Match analysis
13. Penalty Kick
14. Fitness
15. Lesson plans
16. Team concepts
17. Speed of play
18. Shadow play
The differences were significant especially in the AYSO association where the curriculum was geared towards coaches who were volunteers and the NSCAA, USSF were geared more to coaches with more previous coaching experience and knowledge of the game.
REFERENCES


Play. Success in Soccer, 1, (6), 34-39.


