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To: OSA Membership
From: Alex Chiet (Chief Technical Officer)
Mark Marshall (Manager of Coach Development)
Date: Monday 23rd January 2012
Re: **New CSA Physical Literacy Coaching Curriculum launched**

While there is still much consultation planned and a need to build even broader awareness, it's exciting to be able to report that we have officially embarked on implementing the crucially important early-stage building blocks of Long-Term Player Development (LTPD). We are working to put everything in place for our coaches—and our young players—so a thorough and firm foundation is in place in the years to come.

Most of our 700+ Clubs—and many of our Club coaches—are aware that this has been “coming”, but now it's here. The new coaching curriculum, developed by the Canadian Soccer Association (CSA) is all about the player—how we engage, teach, train and develop each youngster as an individual and how we can help keep them in the game for life. Our aim is to make our programs player-centered and to ensure they are learning every day and actually enjoying the experience.

We have conducted our first “Active Start” and “FUNdamentals” coaches' workshops in Ottawa and York Region (Woodbridge). The sessions were well attended and as importantly, the feedback has been overwhelmingly positive. Coaches recognized the value of this approach and how it can have a genuinely positive impact on youngsters when it comes to their basic athletic development—as well as their interest in a possible future in soccer.

Specifically, coaches who attended observed, for example, that the new philosophy was “fresh and exciting” and that each coach on hand for the course was “engaged and involved”. Our Learning Facilitators (LF's), felt the new format made for more open and relaxed, so that there was genuine discussion between the LF's and the coaches, which made for a better overall environment.

I should make one thing clear: when we use terms like “player-centered”, we aren't talking about creating over-inflated egos. We simply mean that, going forward, everything we try to do from a coaching and development perspective will be assessed through the lens of: how can we make things better for the individual soccer development of every boy and girl across the province, wherever they live.



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I also wanted to specifically highlight the importance of development stage-specific coaching, evidenced throughout the new curriculum. The OSA recognizes and supports the NCCP's approach to education training by, in part, using appropriate adult education principles such as facilitated learning, self-directed modules and the thorough evaluation of both coaches and facilitators.

In these all-important early learning stages—Active Start (up to U6), FUNdamentals (U6-U9 for boys, U6-U8 for girls) and Learning to Train (U9 to U12 males and U8-U11 females)—our coaches will focus on activities and/or training methods that are suited to young players at each of those respective stages. The focus won't be strictly on chronological age but rather what *development* stage is each player at. As we all understand, especially at these younger ages, young people develop at vastly different times. Some youngsters mature physically very quickly, for example, and this needs to be taken into consideration.

In our new coaching courses, the overall teaching approach is mentorship and facilitation-based, to help participants learn in a supportive environment. Coaches learn best by “doing” and they can develop and refine their skills when they are given the opportunity to apply particular concepts.

The workshops are designed to allow participants to practice the core skills required in each different coaching situation and to enable them to reflect on how they can apply what they have learned in their own programs later on.

I extend a special thank you to our Learning Facilitators for their great work. Thank you as well to all those who have attended our coaching courses so far. If you have not already done so, please sign up for an upcoming course (<http://www.ontariosoccer.net/Coach/CourseClinicCalendar.aspx>), or ask your Club to schedule one.

Regards,

Alex Chiet
Chief Technical Officer

Mark Marshall
Manager of Coach Development