

Excellence vs. Winning Mentality

	Excellence-Focused	Winning-Focused
Player Abilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Growth Mindset – All players have the ability to learn and improve in all areas Players learn the value of focused, hard work and more fully develop as people and players 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fixed Mindset – Players are seen as having certain abilities, strengths and weaknesses Players learn to play within their “limitations” and do not develop to their full potential
Practice Sessions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Long-term, yearly, and seasonal development plans are designed to progress players in a focused direction Problems or deficiencies are not fixed as they emerge – the focus is on what players are trying to accomplish according to short and long-term plans 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Designed to win each match or improve from the previous match Show no systematic or logical progression and result in limited progress toward long-term development
Risk Taking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Players are encouraged to - and do - take risks and try new things without fear of failure Players gain a deeper understanding through first-hand experience 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Players are hesitant and discouraged from taking risks in order to avoid losing the ball Players do not learn through discovery or their own experiences; creativity is diminished
Competition	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Success is defined by improving one’s own abilities and competing with one’s own performance Players recognize their progress and continue to work hard in order to continue improving and competing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Competition is focused on comparing one’s self to peers and success is defined by out-performing others Certain players experience “success” regularly, others do not, resulting in lowered self-esteem and confidence, which discourages most players from competing and trying to improve
Team Competitions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teams play in an appropriate flight to provide the best possible balance of success and challenges Players are able to see their progress in games while also being pushed to have to keep improving 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teams either play in a higher flight to fulfill a sense of prestige, or a lower flight to garner more wins Players either do not have the opportunity to execute learned concepts or are not challenged enough to improve
Incentives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Players are motivated and incentivized to work toward success intrinsically (from within) Love of the game, passion to compete, and a desire to improve drive players to work toward goals 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Players are incentivized to reach specific goals extrinsically (from outside sources) Parents, coaches use rewards (money, candy, etc.) to drive action – players play for prizes, not themselves
Playing Time	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Players play nearly the same amount, each getting opportunities to “start” Players have a fair/even chance to develop; progress is determined by their efforts, not their opportunities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> “Stronger” players play significantly more than “lesser” players “Lesser” players lose the opportunity to learn through experience – the gap between the two groups increases
Positional Rotation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Every player has the opportunity to play in multiple positions, regardless of match results Players develop a complete understanding of the game, giving them adaptability and flexibility in playing in the long-term 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Players are confined to one or few positions where they are currently considered strongest Players lose the opportunity to learn, understand, and experience different aspects of the game, creating one-dimensional players
Referee Interactions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Referee decisions are respected and resulting situations dealt with Players learn how to deal with uncontrollable circumstances, adapt to change, and problem solve 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Referees are challenged on their judgement and ability to enforce the laws of the game Players learn to disrespect officials, as well as blame officials for poor results, rather than taking responsibility for their performance
Adults	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adults stick to the long-term plan, regardless of short-term results, allowing the players to play and develop at their own pace In the end, players have the opportunity to develop fully and love the game 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adults focus on short-term and/or match results, rather than the long-term progress of the players Actions are based on short-term results and situations, resulting in long-term consequences and detriments to player development
Winning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Winning is sought after, but is secondary to the process of improving and striving for excellence; winning is an eventual byproduct of proper development Players learn from every experience and stay optimistic and focused on improving, realizing their successes and improvements in their abilities, looking forward to the next opportunity to compete 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Success is defined by winning and results Players do not learn from positive results and are discouraged after poor results; they become frustrated by a “lack of success,” resulting in a loss of interest in trying or playing the sport