



Grasshopper Football Club KEY CONCEPTS OF PLAY

Updated 1/1/11

- There are fundamental concepts that all players must learn in order to play soccer.
- These concepts must be introduced to players at a young age and emphasized throughout development. Habits are formed early. Good habits must be the goal.
- These concepts of play are just as important as technique for young players.
- These concepts will take root if coaches emphasize these principles continually and consistently, in all training sessions and matches, regardless of the theme of the day.

LEVEL 1 RULES

- **PURPOSEFUL PLAY - NO AIMLESS KICKING**
 - every touch is either for the benefit of oneself or a teammate
- **PLAY CANNOT ALWAYS BE FORWARD**
 - most situations require going backward & sideways in order to go forward successfully
 - ball movement is the basis for making space to successfully attack into
- **ONLY ONE PLAYER ON THE BALL AT A TIME**
 - commitment, communication, separation, & support

LEVEL 2 RULES

- **POSITIVE TOUCHES**
 - stopping the ball rarely makes sense, ball must always go somewhere
 - directional control, dribbling, passing to maintain possession
- **PLAY THE WAY YOU FACE**
 - essential to maintain possession and to link players together
 - win the ball to self into space or to a teammate in the directions you face
- **TARGET PLAY**
 - play through forward target(s) to combine with midfield in a way to bring the team into attack rather than go it alone
 - typically requires more players behind the ball than in advance of the ball
- **MAINTAIN TEAM SHAPE**
 - shape that allows transition from attacking to defending, and defending to attacking
 - we should be able to simply say “get your shape” and players know what this means and fix their shape on the field
 - even 2 players have “shape,” position in relation to teammates, opponents, ball, goal
 - players must be thinking always “if the ball is lost now, can we defend successfully?”
- **PLAY AT ANGLES**
 - no square or vertical passes, play balls that maintain vision and shape
 - no square or vertical support, support to maintain vision and shape
- **COMMIT DEFENDERS**
 - commit defenders to make space for self and/or teammates
 - all penetrating opportunities stem from committing defenders to the ball: 1v1, wall-pass, overlap, double-pass, thru pass, etc.
- **MAKE OPPONENTS FACE THEIR OWN GOAL**
 - touches or passes in behind opponents makes them face their own goal
 - balls in behind opponents create attacking advantage AND advantage transitioning to defending should possession be lost
- **HIGH PERCENTAGE/LOW PERCENTAGE DECISIONS**
 - players need to understand that their decision carry a relative likelihood of success
 - players must make high percentage decisions the majority of the time