

## **MYS PLAYER PATHWAYS AND DEVELOPMENT PHILOSOPHY**

MYS Player Development Pathways can be divided into 4 stages:

**U5-U8**      **Enjoying the Game:** Natural movements (running, jumping, rolling etc.) are all part of players learning to understand their bodies, help develop balance and agility and begin a love affair with the game. Should be lots of interaction with the ball. Each player should have a ball in training.

**U8-U12**      **Fundamental Mastery:** Teaching the fundamental techniques to perform in a game occurs during this time period – the best in one’s career to acquire technique. Understand tactical ideas of support and working together to defend or in combinations to attack will begin during this time period as well.

**U12-U15**      **Application of Technique:** At these ages, players learn how to apply the techniques they use in the game (skill). They understand consequences for good or bad execution and for good or bad ideas (tactics). It will be the beginning of learning “gamesmanship” – how to perform to have best chances to gain results. As always, the focus is on the process of playing, however certain times in the game may now require a different approach (i.e. – holding a lead or chasing a deficit in the last few minutes may cause a different strategy than the rest of the game).

**U15-U18**      **Competitive Stage:** Without losing sight that focusing on process goals is the key to earning appropriate outcomes, this is when results and finding ways to achieve them become increasingly important. **Learning how to get out of groups in a tournament/showcase environment comes into play as well as teaching the things that can best prepare a player for competing on the HS and College levels.**

### **THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE McLEAN GOALKEEPER**

The handling of goalkeepers with youth soccer is an issue that creates considerable discussion among coaches. Restricting a player to the position of goalkeeper as too early of an age may have a negative effect and could eliminate them from future participation in soccer. Children grow at different rates and times. It is impossible to predict what a child will develop into the best goalkeeper when they are ten years old. Early selection as a goalkeeper may not be in the player’s best long-term interest. Development of a goalkeeper must be carefully monitored and conducted. The progressive teaching of technical skills is important given the concerns for “safety” within the position.

## PRINCIPLES OF PLAY

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Principles of Attack	Principles of Defense
Penetration	Pressure
Depth (Support)	Delay
Mobility	Depth (Cover)
Width	Balance
Improvisation	Compactness
Finishing	Control and Restraint

### Fundamental Principles of Attack

**Penetration** – When you are dribbling forward, passing forward, or shooting, you are attempting penetration.

**Depth (Support)** – Good width and depth provides the player on the ball with all around support so that there are options to play the ball forward, square or back. The more options a player has, the less likely they will lose the ball. Creating depth means spacing out up and down the field.

**Mobility** – Mobility means movement. Movement is important in the game so that players can create space for themselves or for their teammates. Players without the ball need to keep moving to unbalance the opponent's defense, and by making "runs" into positions that will create scoring opportunities or create space for the teammates near the ball.

**Width** – Creating width means spacing out side to side on the field. Good width provides opportunities to attack on either side of the field and up the middle of the field.

**Improvisation** – When players use their own individual flair to create passing or shooting opportunities to themselves or for teammates. Clever dribbling or passing eliminates defenders and creates openings for attackers.

**Finishing** – Simply put, finishing is successfully scoring a goal on scoring opportunities. This means shooting when you should shoot, making sure your shots are on goal and not wide nor over the goal, getting the ball past the goal keeper, etc.

## Fundamental Principles of Defense

**Pressure** – The moment possession is lost the nearest player tries to regain possession or apply pressure on the ball. Players giving immediate chase can also help to delay the attack by stopping the other team from playing the ball forward quickly.

**Delay** – While applying pressure, the defender must be careful to not over-commit. If they are beaten easily, the attacking team may get a scoring chance quickly. A pressuring defender should also be looking to slow down or “delay” the attacking player.

**Depth (Cover)** – While the ball is being pressured all other players should be getting into defensive positions. The positions taken should support the pressuring defender in case they are beaten. This is called providing defensive cover.

**Balance** – As your team concentrates their defense around the ball, defenders not near the ball must position themselves to cover important spaces (normally central areas) to prevent attackers from making penetrating runs into these spaces.

**Compactness** – As you organize your defense, limit the time and space for the opponent by concentrating your defense in the general area of the ball. Defenders should also attempt to stay “goal side” to limit the other team’s ability to directly attack the goal.

**Control and Restraint** – Players often make poorly timed or off-balanced attempts to win the ball. You must play “under control” when challenging for the ball. In addition, you should refrain from tackling unless you are confident you will win the ball.

***“PRINCIPLES NEVER CHANGE – THAT’S WHY THEY ARE PRINCIPLES”***