

Coaching Tool: tier system

The tier system is a direct association (formation) with all teams ranging from youth (5 year olds) to adult professional soccer within a club structure. This formation as a group or “club” forms a public identity. The identity is that the general public opinion is one that the club is viewed as an organization with positive role models and an important part of the community.

One of the most powerful teaching tools is to observe and emulate. The general saying is that a picture is worth 1,000 words. In other words, players learn much easier from watching. The tier system would give each player an opportunity to observe players at a higher level within their club and emulate them. At the annual national soccer coaches (NSCAA) convention, Anson Dorance the head of NSCAA sports psychology department said in his lecture, “ players need to see games and imitate”

The Clube Atletico Paranaense from Brazil is one of the premier player development clubs in the world. Oscar Erichson, Ph. D. and coaching director of their academy gave another lecture at the national soccer coaches association (NSCAA) convention on their program. Oscar said “Our player development uses the men’s team (senior team) as a fundamental part for player development, our youth players go onto the field and kick the ball around half an hour prior to the team going onto the field, they then watch the game and are motivated by saying, *I was there where my idol is*. The players mirror their idol’s play with themselves at practice and games. Another aspect of senior team used, is to tell our young players to watch a certain player in the senior team in order to correct the young players bad habits.”

Players and youth like to be associated with credible organizations not only for self esteem but to be more readily accepted in their communities and peer groups. The players in the tier system will have goals which is to play with the clubs older teams and the youth player will naturally train hard and be inspired to reach the level of their idols. These youth players will on their own practice moves, fakes, etc. that they watch their favorite player do. This will increase their passion for the game and in turn they spend more time training.

Having players at the adult pro level will supply the younger teams with coaches and clinicians. The young players are now learning from players they actually see perform in exciting games with fans cheering them on. The players who have gone through the program and are at the senior team level can also give back to the club by being involved in youth activities. This is one of the most important motivational tools for player development.

The United Soccer Leagues is an ideal organization for the tier system. Teams affiliated with USL can have an additional own youth development program with large numbers participating. This would be part of a marketing plan to bring players and family members to attend senior games. Also, organizing camps throughout the area is another

means of creating a fan base. This would create a large portion of area population involvement and in addition the club would acquire a high level of credibility.

In conclusion, players learn by emulating others. They will be inspired to work hard and reach the higher level. The natural tendency to imitate and be inspired to play at their own clubs adult level, creates a powerful environment to develop players. The tier system offers these most fundamental and important teaching tools.