

Skill and Tactical Benchmarks for Coal City Soccer Club

U-19

Skills

1. Receiving of ball with: *player should be able to properly select from any of these to handle balls of various elevation*
 - Soft “first touch” with any part of foot
 - Receiving balls off the ground – “running through” balls and putting them in a playable position
 - Chest to foot/ thigh to foot
 - Must have juggling skills up to 10 in a row
2. Footwork: *Players should be very comfortable taking on opponent 1 v 1 using*
 - Inside of foot/outside of foot directional change
 - Shielding/ Turning
 - Smart first touches
 - Pull back, scissors and other moves
 - Creating shooting space in box
3. Shooting: *must be able to read goalie body language and gauge shot accordingly*
 - Angled approach/ankles locked with laces
 - Heading with power
 - Volley shots/one-timers
 - Chip and/or bend shots
4. Passing
 - Two-touch and one-touch with fluidity – can string together 5 or more passes in game situations with regularity
 - Must have 40 yard range on long passing
 - Crosses at or above head height
5. Defense:
 - The physicality necessary in winning 50/50 balls and marking up must be conditioned
 - Immediate recognition and execution of defensive pressure
 - Maintaining goal-side positioning in place of always committing to ball
 - Slide tackling permitted if from the front
 - Players should have on field communication using “I got ball”, “I got number ...”, “pushing left”,,

Tactics

1. Off ball movement:
 - Seeking and recognizing open space
 - Diagonal runs to create separation
 - Making wide runs and dummy runs – all to spread out defenses
 - Overlapping and checking runs
2. Ball movement:
 - Angled or square passing
 - Drop pass – using defenders more often in possession play

Skill and Tactical Benchmarks for Coal City Soccer Club

- Timed pass to get behind line of defense
 - Centering passes/crosses
 - Changing point of attack with regularity – switching fields especially in middle 3rd of field
3. Defense:
- Pressure/support/balance – how two or more players coordinate
 - Man marking – especially important for set pieces
 - Zonal defense – especially for your back line
 - Channeling/jockeying attacking players – protecting the triangle
 - Seamless switching of marking assignments
4. Systems of play: 11 v 11
- Most have 4 defenders; most often playing on the defensive half of field
 - Remaining attacking players must take on positions of midfield and forward:
 - Two recommended systems: the 4 – 3 – 3 and the 4 – 4 – 2
 - Refer to U-14 for suggested roles of other players however coach should be customizing system to best meet the team personnel
 - System should be able to also change throughout a match to adjust to opponent's strengths and weakness
 - It is also suggested that outside defenders more regularly make high and wide runs to push up on the attack
 - Positioning must always keep in mind offsides

U-14 **Skills**

1. Receiving of ball with: *player should be able to properly select from any of these to handle balls of various elevation*
- Soft “first touch” with any part of foot
 - Receiving balls off the ground – “running through” balls and putting them in a playable position
 - Chest to foot/ thigh to foot
2. Footwork: *all of the following should be able to be done with the head up at least part of the time*
- Inside of foot/outside of foot directional change
 - Shielding/ Turning
 - Smart first touches
 - Pull back, scissors and other moves
3. Shooting:
- Angled approach
 - Ankles locked with laces
 - Heading with regularity
 - Beginning to chip and/or bend shots
4. Passing
- Two-touch and one-touch with fluidity
 - Must have 30 yard range on long passing

Skill and Tactical Benchmarks for Coal City Soccer Club

- Crosses at head height
- 5. Defense
 - Frontal tackling with “L-stance”
 - Marking up throughout match
 - Immediate recognition and execution of defensive pressure
 - Maintaining goal-side positioning in place of always committing to ball
 - Slide tackling permitted if from the front
 - Players should have on field communication using “I got ball”, “I got number ...”,

Tactics

1. Off ball movement:
 - Seeking and recognizing open space
 - Diagonal runs to create separation
 - Making wide runs – stretching defenses
 - Dummy and checking runs
 - Overlapping runs
2. Ball movement:
 - Square passing/give and go
 - Drop pass – using defenders more often in possession play
 - Angled passes finding holes in defense
 - Timed pass to get behind line of defense
 - Centering passes/crosses
3. Defense:
 - Pressure/support/balance – how two or more players coordinate
 - Man marking – especially important for set pieces
 - Zonal defense – especially for your back line
 - Channeling/jockeying attacking players – protecting the triangle
4. Systems of play: 11 v 11
 - Most have 4 defenders; most often playing on the defensive half of field
 - Remaining attacking players must take on positions of midfield and forward:
 - Midfielders cover entire field; play often in center third of field
 - “ must initiate attacking runs in becoming immediately available in counter for passes from defense/goalie
 - Forwards are the front runners of the attack; most often play on offensive half of field
 - Forwards work to get behind defenses and also are defensively responsible for pressuring defenses
 - Two recommended systems: the 4 – 3 – 3 and the 4 – 4 – 2
 - Positioning must always keep in mind offsides rules

Skill and Tactical Benchmarks for Coal City Soccer Club

U-12

Skills

1. Receiving of ball with: *player should be able to select from any of these to handle balls of various elevation*
 - Soft “first touch” with any part of foot
 - Receiving balls off the ground – “running through” balls and putting them in a playable position
 - Chest
2. Footwork: *all of the following should be able to be done with the head up at least part of the time*
 - Dribbling with laces
 - Inside of foot/outside of foot directional change
 - Turning
 - Pull back, scissors and other moves
 - Shielding
3. Shooting:
 - Angled approach
 - Ankles locked with laces
 - Beginning to use head
4. Passing
 - Two-touch and one-touch with fluidity
 - Must have 20 yard range on long passing
 - Crosses at least chest high
5. Defense
 - Frontal tackling with “L-stance”
 - Marking up throughout match
 - Immediate recognition and execution of defensive pressure
 - Maintaining goal-side positioning in place of always committing to ball
 - Slide tackling permitted if from the front
 - Players should have on field communication using “I got ball”, “I got number ...”,

Tactics

1. Off ball movement:
 - Seeking and recognizing open space
 - Diagonal runs to create separation
 - Making wide runs – stretching defenses
 - Dummy runs – always make yourself worthy of drawing defenders
 - Checking run
2. Ball movement:
 - Square passing/give and go

Skill and Tactical Benchmarks for Coal City Soccer Club

- Drop pass
 - Angled passes finding holes in defense
 - Timed pass to get behind line of defense
 - Centering passes/crosses
3. Defense:
- Pressure/support/balance – how two or more players coordinate
 - Man marking – especially important for set pieces
 - Zonal defense – especially for your back line – must prioritize most dangerous players to defend
4. Systems of play: 11 v 11
- Most have 4 defenders; most often playing on the defensive half of field
 - Remaining attacking players must take on positions of midfield and forward:
 - Midfielders cover entire field; play often in center third of field
 - “ must initiate attacking runs in becoming immediately available in counter for passes from defense/goalie
 - Forwards are the front runners of the attack; most often play on offensive half of field
 - Forwards work to get behind defenses and also are defensively responsible for pressuring defenses
 - Two recommended systems: the 4 – 3 – 3 and the 4 – 4 – 2
 - Positioning must always keep in mind offsides rules

U-10 **Skills**

1. Receiving of ball with: *player should be able to select from any of these to handle balls of various elevation*
- Inside of foot
 - Outside of foot
 - Sole of foot
 - Top thigh – can redirect ball down to feet
 - Chest - “ “ “ “ “ “
2. Footwork: *all of the following should be able to be done with the head up at least part of the time*
- Dribbling with laces
 - Inside of foot directional change
 - Outside of foot directional change
 - Shielding
3. Shooting:
- Must be able to strike ball near the perimeter of the penalty box with range and accuracy
 - Angled approach
 - Ankles locked with laces (no toes!)

Skill and Tactical Benchmarks for Coal City Soccer Club

4. Passing

- Two-touch and passing while dribbling
- One-touch passing in combination
- Clearing passes must have enough range and be played out in front of attack

5. Defense

- Frontal tackling with “L-stance”
- Marking up throughout match
- Immediate recognition and execution of defensive pressure

Tactics

1. Off ball movement:

- Seeking and recognizing open space
- Making wide runs – stretching defenses
- Checking runs
- Players should understand how their position affects their movement:
 - Defenders imploding ahead of an attack
 - Attackers branching out ahead of an attack
- Getting open for cross passes in penalty box

2. Ball movement:

- Square passing/give and go
- Drop pass – and knowing when NOT to use this
- Timed pass to get behind line of defense
- Centering passes/crosses

3. Defense:

- Left and right side defenders must stay disciplined in staying on their half of the field
- Pressure/support/balance – how two or more players coordinate
- Man marking – especially important for set pieces

4. Systems of play: 9 v 9

- Will commonly use 3 players assigned to defense; most often playing on the defensive half of field
- The position of midfield will be established in all systems:
 - Midfielders get to cover the entire field; but will be encouraged to more often trail behind their forwards
 - Midfielders must be directed to immediately get open for passes from defense/goalie
 - Help provide “shape” to the team by having a permanent right and left midfielder and by having strict assignments at defense
- Two recommended systems: the 3 – 3 – 2 and the 3 – 2 – 3
- Positioning must always keep in mind offsides rules

Skill and Tactical Benchmarks for Coal City Soccer Club

U-8

Skills

1. Receiving of ball with: *player should be able to select from any of these to handle balls of various elevation*
 - Inside of foot
 - Outside of foot
 - Sole of foot
 - Top thigh
2. Footwork: *all of the following should be able to be done with the head up at least part of the time*
 - Dribbling in any direction
 - Inside of foot directional change
 - Can dribble out of trouble – looks for open field and pushed ball into area
 - Shielding
3. Shooting:
 - Must be able to strike ball from outside the goalie box with range and accuracy.
 - More skilled players can place ball into high corners of net
 - Ankles locked with laces (no toes!)
 - Angled approach to first be taught
4. Passing
 - Two-touch and one-touch passing
 - Two-touch passing in combination
 - Proper throw-in technique should be emphasized
 - Clearing passes must have enough range and be played out in front of attack
5. Defense
 - Frontal tackling with “L-stance”
 - Marking up throughout match
 - Recognition and execution of defensive pressure – must know to hustle toward opponent and attempt to gain possession.

Tactics

1. Off ball movement:
 - Alluding defenders to find space
 - Making wide runs – especially important to position wide on goal kicks
 - Players should understand how their position affects their movement:
 - Defenders imploding ahead of an attack
 - Attackers branching out ahead of an attack
 - Getting open for cross passes in penalty box

Skill and Tactical Benchmarks for Coal City Soccer Club

2. Ball movement:
 - Square passing and knowing how to call for a “square”
 - Drop pass
 - Long passing ball behind the pressure
 - Centering passes/crosses
3. Defense:
 - Left and right side defenders must stay disciplined in staying on their half of the field
 - Pressure/support – one defender goes to the ball the other steps behind to support and prevent one-on one with goalie
 - Man marking – especially important for set pieces
4. Systems of play: 7 v 7
 - Will commonly use 2 to 3 players assigned to defense; most often playing on the defensive half of field
 - The position of “trailer” / “trailers” can be utilized as a pseudo-midfielder:
 - Trailers are high playing defenders that can push up and trail behind attacking group of players, but must prioritize defensive duties.
 - Trailers are often asked to neutralize opponents counter attacks
 - Best to use your more skilled and aware players to fill this role
 - Start assigning right and left side positioning to forwards; one forward (striker) can be permanently assigned to offensive half of field to provide a downfield option.
 - Recommended system: the 2 – 1 – 3

U-6 **Skills**

1. Receiving of ball with: *player should be able to select from any of these to handle balls of various elevation*
 - Inside of foot usually
 - Getting behind the ball when trapping
 - Sole of foot – not too high!
2. Footwork: *all of the following should be able to be done with the head up at least part of the time*
 - Dribbling using inside and outside of foot
 - Keep ball close to feet to assure possession is not lost
 - Begin to change speed and direction with ball
 - High priority skill
3. Shooting:
 - Must be able to strike ball from outside the goalie box
 - Can shoot while in motion
 - With laces (no toes!)
 - Low priority skill
4. Passing

Skill and Tactical Benchmarks for Coal City Soccer Club

- Proper throw-in technique should be emphasized
 - Two-touch passing introduced
 - One touch “boom” passes to clear ball into space
5. Defense
- Staying goal-side of ball
 - Gaining possession through aggressive play
 - Clearing ball out of trouble

Tactics

1. Off ball movement:
 - Knowing what it means to “get open” and not always swarm to the ball
 - Hustling back at defense
 - Following the play – recognizing when run forward at offense and when to go for the ball
2. Ball movement:
 - Passing the ball away from opponent
 - Passing to open players upfield
 - Long passing ball behind the pressure
 - Begin teaching kids the idea of a cross pass on offense
3. Defense:
 - Left and right side defenders should try to stay disciplined in staying on their half of the field
 - Work with goalie – knowing when to back away from ball to allow goal to gain possession.
4. Systems of play: 6 v 6
 - Will commonly use 2 players assigned to defense; always playing on the defensive half of field
 - Remaining players will play forward (or “offense”); these players will have freedom to move anywhere on field.
 - One of the forwards can be instructed to stay on the offensive half to establish some sense of shape and space
 - Recommended system: the 2 – 3