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DEVELOPING PLAYERS FOR THE NEXT LEVEL

Mike Matkovich
U18 U.S. MNT Head Coach



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What is the Next Level?

- National Teams
- Professional (MLS, USL, Europe, etc.)
- College, PDL, Amateur



What Do We See?

U.S. MNT U18 Coaching Staff observe these characteristics in players participating in national camps:

- *Technical Abilities*
- *Tactical Awareness*
- *Physical Tendencies*
- *Psychological Demands*



What Do We See?

Technical Abilities

- Need quicker play: 1-2 touch with combination play
- Players who are skillful and can play in “Hard Spots”
- Players who can hit different range of passes with pace and accuracy
- Need skillful players according to their position
 - Forwards: Pure finishers that can hold up balls with their backs at the goal
 - Wide Players: Can cross and beat players 1v1
 - Backs: Can play out of the back and join in the attack
 - Players that can head (to score and to defend)
 - Dead ball specialists
 - Goalkeepers: Kicking game



What Do We See?

Tactical Awareness

- Need players who have an understanding of how to play within a team concept
- Staying tuned in or switched on for 90 minutes
 - Two-way player
 - Transition
- Defending
 - 1v1 and zonal defense
- Field and Situational Awareness
 - Game Management



What Do We See?

Tactical Awareness

- Getting plays right
 - Where to play the ball - Finding correct options
 - When to play fast, when to slow down
- Having ideas when the field shrinks
- Playing under pressure
- Players staying connected with the team
 - Stepping / dropping / stepping into players
 - Getting forward / opening up the field



What Do We See?

Physical Tendencies

- Players need to play 90 minutes at a fast pace
- Understand how to warm up / cool down
 - As a sub
 - Regeneration (cold tub)
- Know how to take care of themselves off the field
 - Diet
 - Rest and recovery



What Do We See?

Psychological Demands

- Attitude
- Handling pressure
- Self belief
- Ability to compete
- Mental toughness
 - Dealing with criticism
 - Setbacks



Advancing to the Next Level

What can you do as an Academy program and as a branch of U.S. Soccer?

CREATE THE BEST POSSIBLE ENVIRONMENT!



Creating An Environment

A place where PLAYERS
can strive towards
their FULL potential!



How Do We Develop Players?

- Club philosophy
 - Playing to develop vs. winning
 - Age appropriate vs. ability appropriate
- Facilities
- Personnel
- Structure
 - What's your plan? (Daily, weekly, monthly, seasonally, yearly)
 - Frequency: a place to play everyday
 - What are you doing with players ages U8 to U14?
 - Intra club / free play
 - College Assistance Program
- Curriculum
 - Intensity of training
 - Accountability
 - Do you push your players to become better



How Do We Develop Players?

- Curriculum (continued)
 - How much of your training sessions are devoted to:
 - General Technical
 - Functional Technique (Individual)
 - Exercises with limited space
 - Functional Exercises (Team)
 - Free play
 - Strength and conditioning program
- Club Culture
 - Non-parental influence
 - Fund Raising
 - Looking for ways to bring the cost down for the players
 - Player dedication



Recommending Players

Get educated

- Know the standard and level
- Do your homework
- Observe things outside your environment



Recommending Players

Understand the international game

- Players must be able to defend
- Players must be able to play under “real” pressure
- Have a tough mentality
- Competitiveness



Recommending Players

**We encourage
recommendations!**

Your reputation is on the line.



Preparing Players For NT Camp

- Physically fit
- Playing regularly
 - Technically sharp
 - Tactically aware
- Get players in an older environment on a regular basis
- Get players to understand how hard it is to make it and remain there
- Reflection of your club
- Get feedback from national team coaches and work with players improvement



Preparing Players For NT Camp

- Being a “young professional” and its expectations
 - Be on time
 - Behavior on and off the field
 - Willingness to accept criticism
 - Doing whatever it takes
 - Not intimidated but humble
 - Character
 - When they return to their club, having the right mentality: not acting above it all



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What Will YOU Do?

Are you willing to go the extra mile
to help your players make it?