

ARTICLE

GAMES VS. PRACTICE

Player Development

Colorado Soccer Association



CSA

The Colorado Soccer Association is dedicated to the development of coaches and players across the state. When one becomes a better coach, it translates into better training for the players. the better the training the quicker players develop.

Coaching Education

The mission of the CSA Educational Program is to provide the most current and advanced information on the growth and development of the youth players. CSA provides the following coaching educational courses for coaches:

- Youth Modules 1, 2, 3
- USSF E
- USSF D
- National Youth License



For more information on coaching education visit the



FUN FOR ALL!

10,000 RULE
YOUTH SOCCER

Practice vs Games: The impact on individual player development by Tom Turner, Ohio Youth Soccer Association North

GAMES VS PRACTICE



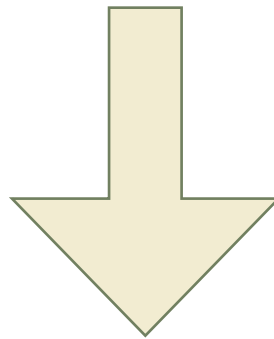
Soccer is a long-term athletic development sport, requiring approximately 10,000 hours of training to reach a level of excellence. Before the modern era, in the days when free play was the normal path to competence, youngsters would regularly compete in soccer activities for 2-3 hours a day, seven days a week. It was not uncommon for enthusiastic kids to log 10-20 hours of soccer per week in isolated skill development and in unstructured games of varying configurations with players of varying ages.

In practical terms, conservatively assuming ten months of soccer and only 15 hours per week, 10,000 hours of training would take around 14 years to accumulate. In all countries around the world, the top young professionals typically break into their club's first team in their late teens or early 20's and reach their prime by their mid- to late-20's. For the top goalkeepers, the learning curve is much slower and many compete well into their 30's.

Level	Game Form	Game Roster	Game Time	Active Time	Ave. Participation	Ave. Playing Time
Professional	11 vs 11	14	90 min.	63 mins	78%	2.25 mins

In the American soccer environment, it is not uncommon for aspiring young players to compete in over 100 games during the calendar year; invariably at the expense of a sound long-term individual training program designed around the principles of the 10,000 hour rule. Many adults and coaches believe that game play is more important than training at the youth level. The numbers say otherwise.... A top-level professional soccer match lasts 90 minutes. Each team is allowed a maximum of three substitutions. Once a player leaves the field, they cannot return. The “active” time, when the ball is in

live play, is approximately 70% of the game time. Each player is in direct contact with the ball for an average of just over two minutes. The corresponding numbers for youth games are noted below.



Level	Game Time	Active Time	Game Form	Max Roster	Ave Participation	Ave Time Possession
U10	50 mins	35 mins	6 vs 6	12	50%	1.46 mins
U12	60 mins	42 mins	8 vs 8	14	57%	1.50 mins
U14	70 mins	49 mins	11 vs 11	18	61%	1.36 mins
U16	80 mins	56 mins	11 vs 11	18	61%	1.56 mins
U18	90 mins	63 mins	11 vs 11	18	61%	1.75 mins

Level	Game Time	Active Time	Game Form	Player to Ball Ration	Ave Participation	Ave Time Possession
U10	50 mins	35 mins	6 vs 6	12:1	100%	2.92 mins
U12	60 mins	42 mins	8 vs 8	16:1	100%	2.63 mins
U14	70 mins	49 mins	11 vs 11	22:1	100%	2.23 mins
U16	80 mins	56 mins	11 vs 11	22:1	100%	2.55 mins
U18	90 mins	63 mins	11 vs 11	22:1	100%	2.86 mins

Assuming maximum game rosters for each age group and also assuming equal playing time, the figures show that playing 100 youth games per season produces a maximum of around 175 minutes of ball possession. At the professional level, playing 100 games in a season would only raise the average to around 225 minutes.

Even for the very best players who rarely leave the field, the average

time of possession is still less than 3 minutes per game; or less than 300 minutes per 100-game season!

The table below highlights the value of training. Well organized youth training sessions maximize ball contact and provide players with repeated exposure to standard game situations.

The figures demonstrate that players can routinely enjoy more than 20 minutes of ball possession in just under two hours; and the 300

minutes of maximum ball possession for the top players can be achieved in approximately fourteen well-organized training sessions, which would take just over a month.

Stated another way, attending well planned training sessions for SIX MONTHS can produce the same number of ball possessions as SIX YEARS of playing 100 games per season.

Training Activity	Player: Ball Ratio	Ave Time	Active Participation	Ave Time Possession
Warm-up Free play (3 vs 3)	6:1	15 mins	100%	2,5 mins
Individual Skill Development	1:1	15 mins	100%	7.5 mins
2 vs 2 Ladder	4 vs 1	4:1	100%	5 mins
4 vs 4 Games	8 vs 1	30 mins	100%	3.75 mins
Game form practice 6 vs 6 / 8 vs 8 / 11 vs 11	16:1	30 mins	100%	2.5 mins
Total average time of possession				21.25 mins

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