

MYSA Coach Tip o' the Week: What is Play–Practice–Play?

April 26, 2019

Hi Coach,

This weekly MYSA Coaching Tip o' the Week is sent to Head Coaches, to share with assistants or others as you wish. If you have a question or suggestion for a future topic let me know.

What is the Play-Practice-Play Method? It's simply one method to use for practice.

Play: This is the part of the beginning of practice. Set up a small-sided game of 2v2–4v4. The younger the players are, smaller numbers like 2v2 is preferred. Start practice by simply allowing them to play freely. Then after a small period of time, approximately 7–8 minutes, add a challenge or a condition to the game.

A coach can also ask them to try something like: “Go around someone with their ball”. This is the challenge part you are making practice more purposeful. The “challenge” part should be something that you want to work on. After this period of time, then break down the practice.

Practice: This is the part of practice where you take what you want to work on and break it down. The first part could be an activity that is more individually, or small-group focused.

Practice: The second activity focuses more on team play. It should be directional and be as close to the game as possible. An idea is to use the same “challenge” game you did earlier in the practice.

Play: After breaking down your practice then put players back into a game of free play. They should be reminded of the ideas and concepts they just worked on.

John Curtis, MYSA Director of Coaching & Player Development

johncurtis@mnyouthsoccer.org