

USING GUIDED DISCOVERY WITH YOUR TEAMS

The goal of the developmental program is to develop the “soccer minds” of our players. We can do this by asking our players questions versus dictating and/or micro managing everything presented. Players who think for themselves will develop into creative players who can anticipate within the game; instead of players who are predictable and react to game situations.

Junior Academy coaches and staff should employ Guided Discovery with their players and teams on the soccer field; just like teachers do with their students in the classroom. Guided Discovery will get your players to think about what they are doing and why they are doing it.

In general, Guided Discovery is not an easy thing for coaches to do. Asking the players “good questions” at the “correct time” is something that is challenging and takes years of practice to master for most. Each coach should practice and think about how Guided Discovery can help you teach your players to think for themselves on the soccer field.

What is Guided Discovery?

Guided Discovery is a process that our coaches can use to introduce new skills presented in various aspects of the curriculum. This process gives players an opportunity to be creative and actively participate with each new skill presented. It also gives an opportunity for the players to ask questions and practice making appropriate choices.

From a coaching perspective a guided discovery session has five components in which coaches should engage their players. Below is a brief description of each step:

Introduction: the player and coach work together to generate excitement about the new skill to be presented.

Generating Ideas: the players list various uses for each new skill presented. Some may be traditional uses and some may be less obvious and more creative. The coach demonstrates appropriate uses of the new skill as they are suggested by the players.

Children Explore: the players experiment with the new skill under the guidance of the coach, thus allowing them to be active participants in the learning. This gives the players an opportunity to formulate any questions they may have.

Sharing: the players have an opportunity to share their discovery of their new skills and point out aspects that they feel would be of beneficial to the team.

Extensions: the coach can expand the new skills so that the players work alone, in pairs, or in small groups to further explore these skills and begin to put them into use.