



IDENTIFYING AND DEVELOPING TALENT IN THE WOMEN'S GAME

Involvement in youth sports begins in broad base recreational programs that can eventually lead into an elite level. This process takes place over a period of many years and is very complex. As young players work their way through youth soccer levels, they are consistently exposed to an increasing measure of challenges and obstacles. Identifying talent (Club, State, Regional, or National) expresses an interest in the elite performer relative to her current level and daily playing/training environment. The best model to identify and develop talent in America (at any and every level) includes a continuous cycle of evaluation in training and competition.

The continuous cycle of identifying and developing talent includes:

Competition–Identification–Selection–Evaluation–Selection–Re-Evaluation (in training and competition) etc...

Competition - watch players play within their daily environment, be it Club or ODP

Identification - identify the most talented players at that level

Selection - invite players to participate at the next level – pools, camps, teams or tryouts

Evaluation - evaluate players performance, in training and in competition. Critical to assess their technical, tactical, physical, and psychological dimensions, along with their work-ethic, discipline, and contributions or conflicts toward team chemistry.

Selection - invite players to participate at the next level – pools, camps, or teams

Re-Evaluation - in training and competition/games, evaluate players on and off the field with her level of competitiveness being the ultimate test of her ability to be for your team.

Evaluating, identifying and developing talent in any selection process is a work in progress. 'Talent' and 'performance' is dynamic (it's always evolving). If a player doesn't continue to grow, her teammates will compete more strongly for a position on the team, and opponents are always improving. Players are capable of and do respond to the demands of training and competition. These experiences provide the substance for them to adapt, learn, and improve performance, thus elevating their current level to the next level. It is important to remember that evaluating players in a number of different environments contributes to the valid assessment of their potential. Every evaluation and selection process should include the following two (2) environments:

1. Competition
2. Training

Competition -to assess and develop current and potential level of play
-to assess and develop ability to adapt to different positions, styles, systems, and environmental factors
-to access and develop each player's 4 pillars of the game

Developing a Model: (see ‘Talent Identification and Development Process Filter’)

Every team/organization/association starts with a large base of players (“All Players,”) invites a “Selected Talent Pool” of players to move up through their system to the “Team Player Pool,” and eventually if they’re good enough to perform at the next level, a player gets invited to be a member of “The team.” A significant part of the development of individual players and the development of the team is based upon the quality and competitive nature of the training and games within your system. Without these two components you are making an educated guess or assumption that players will rise to the next level. Put them in the same environment and train them and have them compete against one another and outside opponents for comparison sake. This will enable your process to be more objective.

Only you and your colleagues can assess the ‘talent identification and development process’ for your team/organization/association. The model must reflect a continuum; a process that is inclusive and based on the integrity of your system and staff involved. The process of identifying potential talent is a skill and a science. Quality coaches, scouts and administrators are required in order to assure your team the best opportunity to identify, recruit, retain and develop players. What level of confidence do you have that you have the best players involved?”



Talent Identification and Development Filter Process

