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Coaching Outside The Box: Changing The Mindset In Youth Soccer (Volume 1)



Synopsis

This book demonstrates what coaches should and should not be doing with young players in the sport and enables you to identify if effective coaching is taking place. "Any parent whose child is playing youth soccer in the U.S. should read this book as the information is going to have a powerful impact on your child's experiences, development, and ultimately their success in the sport. This book is an essential tool for any club, coach, or parent who is truly focusing on player development." Manchester United Youth Academy Coach - Dean Whitehouse Using insightful anecdotes, personal experiences, and perspectives of numerous development experts, they passionately provide the reader with a clear and compelling breakdown of critical issues involved with youth development. Holding nothing back, they unveil the damaging problems that currently exist in U.S. youth soccer due to high numbers of administrators, coaches, and parents demonstrating misguided and outdated beliefs, and/or harboring ulterior motives that are simply not beneficial for the players' best interests. They emphasize how conventional thinking in youth soccer leads to so many youngsters encountering negative experiences during their formative years and is a major driver as to why 70-80% of young players drop out of the sport at a young age before they have even had the opportunity to unlock their true potential. In this book, Mairs and Shaw reveal how coaches and parents can positively impact young players' involvement. They demonstrate how to ignite young players' passion for the sport and arm players with the powerful tools which will help them become successful players in the long-term.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Paul Mairs and Richard Shaw grew up in the soccer hotbed of North West England playing against the likes of David Beckham, Paul Scholes, and Steven Gerrard. After they both progressed through the academy system of the professional and former English Premier League (EPL) club Blackpool FC, Richard went on to gain a National Championship and All-American honors playing college soccer in the U.S., and played professionally in the MISL (Major Indoor Soccer League). Paul continued his playing career in England and became heavily involved in youth development while gaining his Master's degree and pursuing research in sport science. Furthermore, after developing young players both in Europe and the U.S. for over 15 years and travelling to various countries to research coaching methods and philosophies together they have collectively acquired valuable insight and knowledge.

According to "Coaching Outside the Box" (Paul Mairs and Richard Shaw), the proper focus of the youth soccer coach (someone who coaches kids who are 13 years old or younger) is Player Development. Player Development means two things: 1) spending most of the time helping kids learn the basic "technical" skills (passing, trapping, shooting, and dribbling) that are applicable from the pee-wee level to the professional level and 2) fostering a love of the game. If the coach does a good job focusing on Player Development then all the kids on the team will be continuously improving, and they will still be playing soccer by the time they are physically and mentally mature enough to reach their fullest potential. Often times in America, the environment in which the coach operates makes Player Development nearly impossible. Sorry for giving away the ending, but if your child's YOUTH team happens to be 1) in a league 2) where they keep score of the games and 3) publish the team standings and 4) give out the biggest trophy to the team that wins the most games by the season's end, then it's likely Winning is going to be the focus for your kid's coach. Hint: that's not what you want. Toward the end of the book, the authors provide a list of other Red Flags you can use to try to figure out if your kid's coach is focused on Player Development or Winning. Throughout the book you will find strategies coaches and parents (unwittingly) employ to make kids hate them and want to quit the game, many of which I've used myself. Fortunately, I learned the error in my ways and my kids are now in a club where they are not just learning, but happy. Thank you, Jeremy Aven (Director of Coaching, Storm Soccer Academy), for suggesting this book.

FIFA should organize a massive air-drop of this book over the youth soccer fields of the USA! If every soccer parent read this book, I guarantee that the USA would win a World Cup by 2030. What a great book. Not only does it have great content, but it is very easy to read and very well laid out.

You can skim through it in a few hours, and then come back to it as and when needed. For this reason, I think it is a fantastic tool for any coach to convince parents that there is a different way, particularly the references to research and the inclusion of quotes from leading soccer practitioners. The book is an easy way to say "Don't just take my word for it - read this". I am a novice coach living in the USA, but I was born and raised in the UK. The one thing that has been a culture shock to me in the USA was the pay-to-play, win games, recruit players, repeat...culture in youth soccer. I am constantly amazed at how little unstructured youth soccer there is over here. It doesn't seem to have occurred to anyone that what the kids really, really, really need is time on the ball in unstructured play - all they need is an adult to keep them safe, set up goals, maintain order if the kids can't sort it out themselves. I have a nine year old son playing soccer, and he has luxury of spending part of his summers back in the UK, so we get to experience both cultures, and what a difference there is. In the UK, he can attend after school or summer vacation academies run by local football league clubs (even EPL clubs) for as little as a few dollars a day. The local authorities run pick up games in parks for mixed ability and gender - adult supervision is provided to even up the teams, shift kids around and make calls when needed. In the USA, you largely pay-to-play for soccer, and if the coach or parents don't organize extra curricular soccer, it is quite possible that the kids will not touch a soccer ball between practice and match. Also, have you ever tried to find some space in a park at a weekend to run a pick up game - it has been booked out by cash strapped municipalities to the pay-to-play clubs. I have coached outdoor and indoor recreational soccer for two years. My son has exhibited some natural talent for the game, and he recently attended evaluations with a local team. He was invited to play in their competitive program, but somehow it didn't feel quite right. However, I was full of doubts, and I was worried that I might be holding him back, not allowing him to reach his full potential, etc. Fortunately, a friend and fellow parent encouraged me to take a step up in level as a coach, and to place my son in this club's lower commitment "Copper" program. To their credit, the club has been very supportive and hasn't once suggested that I was doing my son a disservice. I bought this book to get some fresh ideas in preparation for the coming season, and it has helped me understand that my instincts were correct after all. For example, time spent travelling to a tournament would be better spent on the ball playing local opposition in friendlies. Finally, there is some very practical advice in here for coaches and parents. As a parent coach, we all feel the urge to win, and we all experience the temptation to over direct from the side line for the short term result of the win. Don't give in to the temptation - this book will be a constant reminder of what is really important. It may make the parents happy in the short run, but we should never forget that the real victory is having kids that want to keep playing.

I have seen my own kids, and the kids of other parents standing idle in lines at soccer practice waiting to kick the ball. Or they sit restless on the grass while the coach tries to explain a drill to them. I thought nothing of it. I thought that that is the way it is supposed to be. But after reading *Coaching Outside the Box*, I now know better. In the book, it says that most young players love nothing more than simply playing the game. I agree with this statement. Instead of a coach coaching the kids, why not just let them play? In the book, it goes on to say that by consistently playing in small sided games players are offered an abundance of opportunities to move their bodies at different speeds in various planes of motion, helping them develop physical literacy. They get more opportunity to touch the ball and to develop their technical skills. So I started thinking about starting a small playgroup for my 4 year old son, where the kids can play small sided games. There will be +- no coaching, just stress-free playing. I emailed the authors to ask them more about small sided games, and to get their opinion on my idea. Richard Shaw replied to me within an hour. He gave me his cell number, and we chatted for a long time. He gave me tremendous advice, and he did not charge anything. He says that he thinks that starting a playgroup to play small sided games is a great idea. He says that at their soccer club, they spend 80 to 90% of the time playing small sided games. It was wonderful talking to Richard. I want to thank him again for his kindness and his advice. I highly recommend this book. It will change the way you think about coaching.

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