

Tryout Evaluations

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I decided to take a break from my recap of my coaching education journey so I could discuss what is probably on everyone's minds these days: tryouts. It's this time of year when even though many players are still competing in spring leagues, tournaments, state cup and other spring sports that we have to take a break to complete tryouts for the 2011/2012 season. This is one of my least favorite tasks as a coach since I always find it very difficult to tell players that they have moved down from one team to another or have been cut altogether. The tryout system is not perfect, yet as coaches we make every effort to be objective in our evaluations of players. One thing that is paramount is that the players be put in game situations so they can demonstrate their skills and knowledge of the game in an environment that replicates the pressures of the game. Having players dribble through cones, stand in long lines to shoot on goal or stand still and pass back and forth are not good activities to assess a player's skill. The best way to evaluate players is to put them in small-sided and full-field games so they have to perform under the demands of the game. Here are key qualities I look for when evaluating players:

1. Technique - Can the players dribble, pass, shoot, control the ball, head, etc. at a level that is age-appropriate? Can they execute the skill under the pressures of time and space? Do they play with their head up? Can they use both feet?
2. Tactical - Do the players know where to be on the field to support play? Do they have good vision? Do they make good decisions especially when under pressure? Can they solve problems on their own or are they always looking to their coaches or parents for direction during the run of play?
3. Physical - Can they change direction quickly and either beat players on attack or catch players on defense? Can they hold off players when they have the ball at their feet? Are they fast and/or quick? Are they fit for the game?
4. Psychological - Do they work hard? Do they have a great attitude? Are they leaders? Are they team players? Are they coachable? Do they motivate themselves and others? How do they deal with adversity?

<http://www.epysa.org/blog/assistant-director-of-coaching-danielle-fagan/2011/04/19/tryout-evaluations/>