



# Golazzo!

## newsletter

### *Plantation FC Club Philosophy*

*Plantation Football Club is a non-profit organization that provides the opportunity for youth soccer players to experience the game of soccer. Our objective is to develop great soccer players along with great human beings. Players are exposed to the technical, tactical, psychological, and physical demands of the game. In addition they will also experience team-building, sportsmanship, work ethic, and leadership skills that will benefit the players for the remainder of the lives on and off the soccer field.*

### Motivational Quote:

“Some people believe football is a matter of life and death. I'm very disappointed with that attitude. I can assure you it is much, much more important than that.”

**Bill Shankly**

*English soccer manager*

## UPCOMING EVENTS

“**Striker Liker?**” – On February 27, 2011 the *NEW* Ft. Lauderdale Strikers will be visiting Plantation FC. A current professional player from the team will be walking the fields and signing autographs. There will also have a “Striker Liker” tent set up at Pine Island Park from 7:15pm-8:15pm with ticket info and free t-shirts.

FYSA State Cup – [http://www.fysa.com/StateCup/index\\_E.html](http://www.fysa.com/StateCup/index_E.html)

FYSA Regional Cup – [http://www.fysa.com/tournaments/RegionACup/index\\_E.html](http://www.fysa.com/tournaments/RegionACup/index_E.html)

PFC Spring and Summer Camp 2011 – [www.plantationeagles.com](http://www.plantationeagles.com)

# EDUCATION

## Development at the very young ages

I just recently finished coaching our recreational clinic for 4 and 5 year olds and experienced coaching my son's U6 team, which I promised myself I would never do. I had a parent from my son's team complain that the coaches (myself) weren't teaching the kids anything. So the question I would of liked to ask this parent is, what do you want me to teach these players?

### Here is what a player at this age needs to be exposed to:

1. **The player must have fun!** This element is the most critical for kids this age. Believe it or not, when they are 18 as well. It's just a different kind of fun. If fun is priority, then they will associate the game of soccer as being fun. Sessions need to be composed of exercises, activities, and games that the players will enjoy. And a little bit of imagination also goes a long way. I will sometimes sit down with my own boys and watch a variety of kid's shows in order to get some ideas of "scenarios" I could use in the activities so the kids can associate the activities with their favorite shows or characters.
2. In order to teach players at this age, you need to know a little about what they are thinking. At this age, it's all about "**ME and MY BALL**". This is why you see a herd of players moving around the field in a game chasing that one little soccer ball. They all want the ball for themselves. They don't want to share the little round thing. I see parents on the sideline yelling to pass or coaches telling the players to spread out. It's not going to happen at this age. They don't think about sharing. They want their own. This is why it's important to create games where every player has their own soccer ball.
3. **The skills they need to learn.** Again, it comes down to how they think. If they are all about "Me and MY Ball" then now is a good time for them to learn how to be comfortable with the ball. Mostly at their feet. But many times that comfort starts with the ball in their hand. Dribbling is the perfect technique to take advantage of at this age. Are they comfortable with the ball at their feet? Can they move with the ball? Can they change the direction of the ball? What are some of the surface areas they can use to move the ball? Can they move the ball while their head is up? These are some questions I ask myself as I watch players this age. Our older players are not comfortable with the ball and the main reason is we didn't allow them the opportunity to be comfortable with the ball when they were young.
4. **Play time. Play is defined as the work of children.** It consists of those activities performed for self-amusement that have behavioral, social, and psychomotor rewards. It is child-directed, and the rewards come from within the individual child; it is enjoyable and spontaneous. This is something we are all guilty of taking away from our kids. We want to organize their games, their roles, who they play with, and the outcome of their play. *Play is for the players.* This is where they have a chance to try different things, sometimes having nothing to do with soccer even though they are on the soccer field. Here is where players can try things with the ball. Move the ball to the right or left, around an opponent, changing their direction, moving toward the opponent's goal, and on many occasions toward their own goal. This is also where players should be given the opportunity to make their own decisions. Not a parent or coach yelling every little move they make. We want the players to take ownership of their play. However, parents and coaches don't have the patience to allow this to unfold. We want to see immediate progress. If we never give them a chance to take ownership, then they will never be able to think for themselves on the field.

**So after putting together all I mentioned above. My practice session might look a little like this.**

1. **Warm up with the BALL.** Maybe a fun activity where the players need to move their ball to get away from the green blob (that's me). In the meantime, I can maybe show them different ways to move their ball away from the blob. If I cannot demonstrate that then maybe I need to recognize which one of my players does it well and have him/her demonstrate. Learning through observation is very important at this age so I want to make sure I'm always painting a picture of what I am looking for. I could drag this game on for a good 20 minutes but I want things to be fresh, especially for this age. If not, you will find yourself chasing kids all over the place.
2. **Then I will go into my GAME, or scrimmage.** This is where they "play" soccer. Small sided games are best in order to make sure nobody can hide and the more touches a player gets, the more he will improve. I'm not coaching in this game, this is their time. Maybe a player will execute something we worked on in the warm up. If he does, I'm throwing a party on the sideline. And if he doesn't execute, then I just wait for it to happen over the next few sessions.

**As you can see, it's a simple plan.** It gets complicated when we want to teach 5 year olds too much. All we end of doing is confusing them and its no longer fun. I ran a few sessions for my son's u6 team and I just made sure the players got lots of touches on the ball and had some fun. On game day, I attempted to do a warm up prior to the game. It doesn't work. At this age, they don't need a warm up. They are ready to go. And I don't need to get them organized, because that organization is not going to last very long. And forget about the half time speech. Although they may look like they are listening, most of the time they are not, especially after 20 seconds of talking. And it's not about the coach taking control, it's about the players having fun. And we know, control is not always fun.

I do remember playing a team where a couple of players were asked to stand in front of their goal and were not allowed to move until the ball came their way. The coaches called them defenders. I call it BORING! Seems very organized from the outside, but how much fun is it to stand there and watch everyone else play. And you know what those defenders were doing most of the time? Picking the grass or catching butterflies. LET THE KIDS PLAY!!! As you can see, there is not much to teach at this age. If they have fun, they will find a way to learn on their own. Give them a chance, you will be amazed.

Enjoy,

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**\*\* If there's a topic you would like to see discussed, please email your suggestions to [ramosport@aol.com](mailto:ramosport@aol.com) with "Newsletter Topic" in the Subject field.**



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