

Taking a Break – It Doesn't Make Sense

Should kids be forced to take a break from soccer...for example during the summer and/or winter?

Earlier in my coaching career when I volunteer coached in my alma-mater youth soccer club, (Quarry Rovers, Oxford, England), I used to take the summer off from coaching. Inevitably the boys regressed during that break. When we got back together in August my players were at least a month behind where they were when we parted ways in May. Some teams take two months off during the second winter indoor session. Others take time off during the summer. Add family vacation into this mix and some local players take 2-3 months off at various times during the year.

The negatives of summer vacation regression are well documented in teaching. After studying this and experiencing the consequences for ourselves the Legends club long ago abandoned the idea of enforcing an annual break. When children return to school after the summer break their knowledge and recall has regressed to early spring levels. When we took a break our players didn't just stagnate, they went backwards. While our players regressed, other players who didn't take a break, continued to progress. We also factored in the positive progress of teammates and opponents who continued to attend camps and soccer training while others lost ground. We learned the hard way that the ultimate result of not making a full commitment or taking an unnecessary break is the loss of much more than the time of the break.

Continuing to grow, (progression), is the logical positive result of making an optimal year round commitment. The motivation for continuing to practice and play should be the desire for maximum progress and development not fear of regression. This is a policy for all the right reasons. It is one that optimizes positive potential in soccer, i.e. that of the mind, body, technique and tactics, but also in life i.e. that of brave, creative leadership character. The motivation is to make every child exceptional by magnifying decisive soccer specific attributes and productive lifetime characteristics.

Developing brave, creative leadership character is the specialty of the Legends club. Our players love the entertaining deceptive dribbling and intense shooting Legends emphasis. The deep character our players develop has historically served them very well. Children who play for the Legends experience little burn-out because our unique focus on deceptive dribbling and finishing is a ton of fun. Plus each child develops certain knowledge that they are exceptional.

The forward progress never stops! This is one more reason why Legends players get ahead in soccer and life!