



The FA Youth Award – Module 3



FA YOUTH AWARD Module 3 - “DEVELOPING THE PLAYER”

These notes were taken from the FA Youth Award Module 3 course conducted at Wokefield Park near Reading on the weekends of 30th & 31st October and 20th & 21st November 2010.

The course was presented by Pete Sturgess, Peter Trevivian, Tony McCallum SW RCDM and assisted by Ben Bartlett and Paul Lever.

Pre-Course Reading

We received a pre-course resource approximately 3 weeks before the first weekend of the course which required us to read the content and then self-test by answering a series of questions at the end of each section.

This resource touched on 4 sections of player’s physical development:

- Aspects of Motor Development, Balance, Coordination, Proprioception and Patterning
- Football Specific Speed Development
- Core Strength
- Flexibility

There was no reference during the course to the work we completed in this booklet.

However, at the end of the course we were told that part of the Final Assessment in order to achieve the Award, will include questions on all three of the course Modules, so I would expect to be asked something about the physical development of young players as part of that process.

Certification / Award

We were advised that it was not compulsory to submit yourself for a Final Assessment (successful achievement will generate the FA Youth Award – which it is hoped will attract a UEFA B Youth Award Status).

To achieve the UEFA B, though, you will need to undertake a successful Final Assessment.

However, an alternative solution is to complete the full pack (including 10 hours of recorded, delivered and self-reviewed coaching sessions where the initial 4 sessions must be linked by a theme and then the remaining 6 should be linked by a theme BUT can be 3 and 3 rather than 6) and submit it to The FA for review.

The reasoning here is that you can show planning for player development skills and understanding.

This alternative submission will generate an attendance certificate, similar to those obtained from completion of the Modules 1 & 2 and demonstrates that you have attended the course (and, therefore, acquired the knowledge from it).

As with the other Modules, full attendance is required.



The FA Youth Award – Module 3



Day 1 - 30th October

Peter Trevivian started by stating that this was a journey through ONE course but broken into THREE Modules. He drew the analogy that it was like moving through a session – technical to skill to game like practice.

As a group, we reviewed aspects of the Modules 1 and 2 and discussed / recalled the content covered in those and looked to provide a link to Module 3.

Interventions

This Module was to look at how you interact, as a coach, with the young players – the staff referred to this as your “interventions” - and therefore how you affect their development.

We were minded to not make too many interventions – allowing players to make mistakes and see if they can find their own way.

We were also minded to not criticise players for mistakes (decisions, technique etc) they make in activities they have not yet practiced.

We were encouraged to continue to allow players to take ownership – ask them to plan and run a warm up around a topic, for example. This allows you as a coach to test the players’ understanding.

We were asked to allow more play at activities / practices we plan to allow us to do more observation / analysis of what each individual or small group of players understands / can do / still needs practice at. This allows you to do the best for future planning.

However, extended observation /analysis **may** look to parents / other club officials as though you are not actually doing anything !

Q&A / Guided Discovery

Use more Q&A to test players understanding and allow that Q&A to lead to more Guided Discovery techniques (“can you show me what will happen / what you will do..”)

In respect of appearances to others, Pete Sturgess suggested carrying out team talks / session briefings in front of parents so that they understand what the players are being asked to do / work on.

One of the course participants told of how he asks the parents of his team “What did they do well?” (There may be a negative outcome to this strategy, of course!)

Practice Spectrum

We further referred to the practice spectrum – Constant → Variable → Random and the benefits and trade-offs that are necessary, especially at grassroots level and the challenges of meeting the needs of all players.



The FA Youth Award – Module 3



QUOTE:

John Allpress, one of the driving forces behind the Youth Awards, was quoted as saying that players can only be expected to “Give your best guess” – It is the best players can do as the game changes all the time – distances / speeds / angles / situations etc.

To refer to a previous quote “The same thing never happens twice in football – but lots of SIMILAR things happen ALL THE TIME”

Pete Sturgess then told a story of when he was coaching a group he asked a player how many defenders he wanted to play against. The player answered “Three” – which Pete thought was tough; but the player took them all on and scored.

So, the moral is – are we giving players what they NEED / WANT in practice or what *we* THINK they need?

Video

Around midday we reviewed a video montage highlighting key aspects of the Modules 1&2.

We were told that Module 3 gives us a chance to see top level coaches and how they have been through their coaching journey and to see what players think and prefer from their journey through football and how we, as coaches, can make sure we make appropriate “Interventions”.

In an upcoming video, we would be given the opportunity to review the strong link between Game Action and a practice session.

Questions To Consider

We were then split into groups to discuss a series of questions – each group had to answer Question 1 and then one each of the other 5 questions:

Q1 -How does a positive environment help players learn? What could it consist of and how does this manifest itself in practical activities?

Q2 – How do players learn best? How can the coach best support player’s learning?

Q3 – How do Agility, Balance, Co-ordination and Speed help in the development of young players in the 5-12 age range? What activities both inside and outside football can support this development?

Q4 – What is the practice spectrum? What kind of football activities help players learn how to play the game and what type of activities will help them develop their bodies?

Q5 – How does age and maturity impact on the development of players? How can the coach try to combat these effects and ensure football activities are inclusive rather than exclusive?



The FA Youth Award – Module 3



Q6 – How can the coach best help the players to become more skilful? How may football activities change as the players become more experienced?

Who are the “Best” Players?

Pete Sturgess talked about how we might see the best players –

- MIGHT be the kid on the ball with time and space
- Or it MIGHT be the player in the best supporting position
- OR it MIGHT be the kid who can deny passing angles to the opposition and re-adjusts through the evolution of the game

It was also mentioned that ‘finding space’ may involve standing still, instead of specifically running into space or to create space or maybe even just “drifting” so that the ebb and flow of other players brings space for you.

There was some discussion as to whether English players were on a par with continental / foreign counterparts.

“Foreigners ‘Manage’ the Game Better than We Do”

A quote from Stuart Pearce observed that we aren’t far behind technically, we are ahead physically but that foreign players “managed the game” better than we do.

12.30-ish was Lunch.

After lunch we were asked by Tony McCallum what response we got from players when talking to them or questioning them about practice.

He asked us to think about responses we get at different ages and what types of responses we get if we speak to individuals/ small groups / bigger groups?

If we get different responses should we consider how we interact with the group and what is the best forum for the players? Some may prefer 1-1 some may prefer small groups and feel less threatened and more able to voice their thoughts / opinions in different group sizes.

What the Players Say

We then got to watch a video of several international players, male and female talking about their journey through football and what they liked / didn’t like about coaching.

Despite the elite level of the players they all said that the key for a coach was to keep things:

- Fun / enjoyable
- Simple
- Positive
- To work on strengths
- Have empathy
- Allow sessions to flow (not too much intervention)
- Provide positive feedback



The FA Youth Award – Module 3



- Be flexible
- Listen to players' views
- Keep sessions relevant

We were then posed the question – How does this list relate to the most and least effective sessions you have delivered?

Relationships

In terms of our interaction with players we were asked to consider how many relationships there were in our own squads?

There are a variety of relationships – you with me and me with you are just two (from each person's perspective).

In a team of 11 players and a coach we were told there are 110 different relationships. Indication is that we must work hard to maintain and develop those relationships if we wish to affect players and their development.

Practicals

We went outside between 3.00-6.00pm for several staff delivered practical sessions in which most players got the chance to participate.

Each session was devised to show that the 'Practice did what it said on the tin' (as per Module 2 – Developing the Practice).

They demonstrated a number of intervention styles, including stopping the play, asking questions of the group / an individual player, setting individual or group challenges ("can you TRY TO...") and reminding players of what the challenges were.

Sessions showed examples of progressive sessions from technical to skill practices and SSG or whole-part-whole type practices using organisation to allow the players lots of goes at what the practice was about.

6.30 – 7.30 was dinner

After dinner groups of four were given a DVD to watch where live match action was shown together with some animated practice organisations and we were asked to either devise our own practices to deliver on Sunday or possibly to copy the one on the animation.

Our group decided to devise our own. Two would deliver and two would feedback afterwards (as would the players taking part).

We would then get our own feedback to the group of four from one of the staff coaches.

Before we wrapped up Day 1 we were reminded of the "trade off" mentioned in Module 2 and were advised that at Module 3 the trade-off is "One Theme; One day".



The FA Youth Award – Module 3



The idea is that multiple outcomes should be built up over time and young players should not be provided with multiple outcome / confusing sessions.

NB – I need to research this further – I am aware that schools are now involving students in “Opening Minds” where I believe multiple subjects are covered at the same time (e.g. Geography / History / Science are linked). However, I am not entirely sure if this is multiple outcomes or just multiple links

Day 2 – 31st October

Major part of the day was taken up with groups delivering sessions, practising their ‘interventions’ and then getting feedback. This was very useful.

Qualities of a Modern Coach

In groups we were asked to reflect on the qualities of a modern coach. During feedback this list was mooted:

- Approachable
- Personable
- Trustworthy
- Organised
- Have different styles
- Be technically / tactically aware – understand the game
- Be adaptable
- Be fair – set standards
- Understand young players
- Have a method
- Be inspirational
- Be aspirational (want to improve self)
- Be innovative / open-minded
- Friendly
- Be prompt

What The Coaches Say

After lunch we were back in the classroom and reviewed a DVD where top level coaches recalled how they developed, how they learned things, what they did to develop themselves and so on.

The coaches on the DVD suggested they became better coaches as a result of:

- Becoming qualified
- Reviewing own work
- Observing other good/experienced coaches at work
- Observe other sports coaching
- Realising people learn in different ways
- Building experience
- Having a variety of experience – schools/clubs at grassroots and elite
- Having different perspectives – boys / girls, grassroots and elite



The FA Youth Award – Module 3



Reflect

We were asked to reflect on our own development- from my point of view I also research via books, internet, Video/DVD and discussing the game / practices with coaching friends.

We were asked to deliberately and actively reflect on our practices and try to understand the learning process more closely and to realise where we could better exploit learning opportunities for our players.

What Do You Need To Improve Upon?

As coaches we were prompted to consider what we need to improve at:-

Get more coaching practice

Consider Interventions – break players into smaller groups

Keep a learning journal

The Candidate pack will give a structure to allow planning and review of themed sessions.

Plan-Do-Review –

- Process will allow us to ensure that anticipated outcomes are actually delivered. That practices are well paced and have progressions, that we communicate effectively and that players have lots of opportunities to practice.

There are three main categories to the review section –

- What Went Well
- EBI – Even Better If..
- Change...for next session / delivery of this session.

As an observation, the session I ended up delivering on the second weekend (Playing Out From The Back) was the third variation of the same practice I had tried for my U11 team.

Tips and Hints

Recognise coaching opportunities

Use different intervention styles

Set progressive challenges in a logical order to develop players understanding

Get players to drop in / advance into other half or zone to create overloads and more passing opportunities.

And then review – as above – What Went Well? What would be better if? What changes would I make?

Next Steps

- Plan deliver and review 4 linked sessions before the second weekend of the course
- Complete the log book in the Candidate pack (can copy pages if you wish)
- Candidates choice but devise linked sessions not just random topics – it helps to plan a development document



The FA Youth Award – Module 3



Second Weekend

- Candidates to pair up in order to review each other's sessions
- Will consist of 12 sessions per day delivered individually by candidates
- Partner and staff coach will review and feedback on content, interventions etc

Log Book

We were then taken through the log book with tips and hints on how to complete / structure each section and to honestly review to say if what you intended actually happened and if not, why not?

We were encouraged to use bullet points in the book.

If the 'actual' didn't match the 'intended' make notes in Section 5 of the Log Book (Observations) not section 4 (Player Experience).

Beyond the Course

You have up to 2 years to submit a further 6 sessions as above, planned, delivered and reviewed with the rest of the completed pack and submit yourself for Final Assessment (if you wish – Final Assessment is not compulsory). Completed pack will generate an attendance certificate – see notes above.

Days 3 and 4 – 20th & 21st November

Main content was 24 practical sessions delivered and then peer and staff coach reviewed.

At the end of Day 4 we had a brief presentation by John Allpress

Challenges

John Allpress told us that the addition of challenges for players had been added in order to help make practices more game like and emphasised that practices should encompass the Principles Of Play.

He told us that such an approach helps to develop Match Instinct in players.

Choices in a game of football are not the same as that of choosing which yoghurt to have from the fridge. The choices in football are much more complex and need a higher level of brain processing to achieve competent / high levels of play.

Players learn to play a sport by playing the sport (or a section from it) and we now have a series of different / additional tools to us to facilitate players learning.

Assessment

John told us that if we choose to be assessed we will be so based upon the design and delivery of football activities that are game-like and work within the principles of play.



The FA Youth Award – Module 3



Intervention Styles

- We should use a variety of intervention styles:
- Guided Discovery
- Show and tell
- Demonstration
- Challenges – ADD THIS TO EVERYTHING ELSE WE KNOW (“Try To..”)
- Questions
- Group work – players strategise for themselves

We were encouraged to NOT do TOO MUCH of one or two things otherwise young players may get fed up.

Understand which players prefer which approach and work to their preferred style, where possible.

John further emphasised that the MOST IMPORTANT part of the Plan/Do/Review sequence is the REVIEW part.

“Constant review leads to lots of small improvements”.

Course Reflections

Staff coach Tony McCallum then reflected on what the staff coaches had seen during the course of the sessions’ delivery. These were to be used as considerations for our future development.

- Use more demonstrations – this is still a very valid and powerful tool – use it to full effect
- Technical information – where mistakes occur and players do not self-correct, be knowledgeable enough and prepared to provide technical / corrective input
- Interventions – use a variety of means in dealing with players – “Stop, Stand Still” is still a valid method – use a whistle, use different styles (see John’s notes above)
- Learning Focus – ensure you understand for whom the session is designed. All players or just 3 or 4 of the group? Individual, unit or whole team? Full backs or forwards etc.
- Provide realism and relevance in the activity
- Challenge appropriately – both the coached team and the opposition in the practice (e.g. defend realistically)
- Consider carefully how/when or if to use constraints, conditions or restrictions – are they realistic? **
- Consider numbers involved and areas of the pitch.
- Take time to actually observe what is happening and manage the group.

** **NB** – It was suggested that we need to be wary of using targets / gates for the gaining of additional points – Does that become the main focus of the practice for young players rather than the objective / learning focus of the activity?

Does the use of “two touch only” make the practice unrealistic in relation to the game?



The FA Youth Award – Module 3



Final Assessment

- Once all 6 subsequent practice sessions have been completed and self-reviewed you can submit book for sign off
- This generates an Attendance Certificate
- You don't have to undertake an assessment
- If you do undertake a Final Assessment and pass you will receive a Level 3 Youth Award – this MAY attract a UEFA B Youth Licence accreditation by the time we reach assessment
- Assessment will take the form of a 2 hour assessment.
- 30 minute interview before a practice
- 1 hour practical assessment
- 30 minute interview post practice

How The Interview Will Work

- The first interview will be about your sessions planned in the log book.
- The assessor will choose two pieces for you to deliver and then observe the session and plan other questions.
- Between the two sessions the assessor may ask you to show another type of intervention in the second session
- The second interview will be about all three Modules not just Module 3 – again the point was made that it is ONE COURSE not THREE
- The assessor will have a series of pre-determined questions from which to ask you – they will not make questions up – and these are designed around what you should be demonstrating / knowing about when working as a youth coach.

Costs

- Mod 3 fee includes the first assessment for the Level 3 Youth Award
- The cost for a re-assessment will be £150

Assessment

- All final assessment candidates to return Learning Journals (log book) to FA Learning at least two weeks prior final assessment
- The assessment portion of module 3 will include assessment of the candidate's knowledge from all three Modules and hence the whole FAYA Youth Award
- Candidates will have prepared 10 sessions in their logbook, two of which will be chosen on the day of assessment for you to “showcase” as part of the assessment.
- Due to designated professional game staffing, assessment can be club based for coaches working in Levels 1-5 of the Pyramid (Premier League to Conference National) **but** there MUST be TWO coaches requiring assessment per tutor. Candidates must provide venue and players. Contact your course co-ordinator at FA Learning to organise an assessment.



The FA Youth Award – Module 3



- Regional assessment opportunities will be provided for coaches working outside of Level 1 – 5 of the Pyramid. FA Learning will provide the venue BUT coaches MUST bring their own squad of players
- There will be 24 regional events per calendar year, each event to consist of one day.
- All regional assessment opportunities will be uploaded to the FA Learning Website and the link e-mailed to all eligible candidates as soon as they become available.