Coaching young athletes

TALK LESS. SHOW MORE.

In 70 filmed youth soccer practices, coaches talked a lot at every age, with almost no change from U9 to U16. The younger the athlete, the shorter the talk should be.

6-8
TRY

Kneel to eye level. Show it once, say one word (“Soft!”), and go. Huddles stay under 30 seconds.

9-11
PRACTICE

Name today’s one thing at the start. Freeze a drill to show it, not to lecture.

12-14
BUILD

Give the why in one sentence. Ask a question before you answer it.

Informed by Ford, Yates & Williams (2010), Journal of Sports Sciences. Age tips are practical coaching recommendations; individual needs vary.