



CALGARY WEST SOCCER CLUB

Parent Education Series

September 2014

Understanding Player Assessments

CWSC uses objective assessments of skills and understanding of the game to arrive at a fair and objective overview of where players are in their development.

We do not base our assessment on subjective game observations where players who are most aggressive, or physically bigger tend to shine. We look for the skills a player needs to play the game, the beautiful way.

This Parent Education series provides you an understanding of why and how CWSC conducts its Player Assessments, to take the place of the traditional "try outs". We understand that players (and their parents) get stressed out about "try outs", and whether they will "make the grade" and the team they want.

We want players and parents to understand that we are on a journey to develop players and we will support players wherever they are on that journey. We will place them in development groups where they fit at the right time, and we will guarantee access to the same training to help players develop.

"Success has a different meaning in youth development!"

We must help our children, after every training or game, to experience personal success. Each player must have fun to succeed. It is not about team success at the early ages.

Players are all going through different stages of development related to their age, and physical and mental maturity. Players need time and patience and support to develop.

Our goal is to teach our players the skills needed, and the understanding of the game, that they need to play the game of soccer lifelong. We want to prepare them for the future and not just for the next game.



Team Lazio U16G 2014

What do we assess? - The performance dependent factors in soccer

What does a player need to play the beautiful game of soccer? ... not just to kick the ball and run, but to really play the game the way it deserves to be played, and how players deserve to play the game.

There are four the performance dependent factors in soccer:

Technique (how to handle the ball in all of the different game situations)

Tactic (how to play the game according to the “Laws of the Game”; what to do as an individual player and how to work together as a group/ team)

Physical abilities (movement, coordination, stamina and endurance, speed and power...)

Mental game abilities

There are basic techniques a players needs in soccer—techniques to take control of the ball; techniques to keep control; and techniques to score.

The Basic Techniques thus include passing, receiving, dribbling and shooting as well as feints.

Players also need to understand how to “play” the game. Although coaches and clubs may emphasize tactical systems, and “break out patterns”, especially in indoor, the main understanding in the game of soccer is to create triangles again and again in order to keep possession of the ball. The player with the ball needs always a minimum of two players (options) to pass the ball. We call this an “open triangle” to the player with the ball, one player ‘right’ and one player ‘left’.

As part of our commitment to player development, we have invested in IT tools which will allow players to view and track their individual assessment results over time.

When you login to your member account, you will be able to access your child’s individual player assessment results.



Skill development takes time, patience, and repetition, repetition, repetition.

It requires focused participation and perseverance.

The journey needs to be fun.

Relating Skill Tests to Soccer

Our player assessment includes:

Skill tests:

- Slalom dribbling - the player who can control the ball the best will be the fastest dribbler
- 20m fast straight dribbling - the player who can beat opposite players with a fast and controlled dribbling can create advantages in a game
- Agility run - shows the coordination level of a player and the ability to switch the direction fast
- 20m (up to U10) or 30m sprint - speed is an important factor in soccer; who can run fast will be first at the ball

All these tests include assessment of basic techniques, physical abilities, individual tactics and mental stability and toughness.

The four skill tests are objective. We will time two runs each and the best will count. Everybody has to do the same tests.

Basic game situations:

- 3 vs. 1
- 4 vs. 2

The basic game situations 3 vs. 1 and 4 vs. 2 include fundamental techniques like passing and receiving with the inside of the foot, the movement of the ball and decision-making in a restricted area. Players that can play these small sided games, will be able to play the real game.

The player assessment will show where the players are, over the course of a season; what areas they have improved on, and/ or what areas we have to work on.

Based on the results of the player assessments, we will build **development groups**. Players that belong to the same level of skill development and understanding of the game will train together in academy.

League teams will be formed from these development groups and will, for the most part, be the same as the development groups. However, players who are not yet ready to play on teams at a higher level will train with the players from that higher team, in development groups so that they can eventually transition to those teams.



Team Sampdoria 2013

Research in Germany has shown how important these basic abilities are for the development of a soccer player. These basic abilities need to be developed in a very young age (between nine and thirteen years of age). We call this the "**golden age of learning**". If players do not learn the basics in these years they will carry these problems throughout their whole 'career'.

Why do we work with Athlete Factory?



The Athlete Factory conditioning progression for CWSC includes 4 key elements; Energy Systems, Agility, Speed and Power, designed specifically to provide each athlete with the conditioning skill set that will enable them to become a better soccer player. The specific emphasis is assessed in conjunction with the CWSC Technical Director, taking into consideration such factors as individual performance assessments, observations of the athletes' strengths and weaknesses, and competition schedules.

Energy Systems

We coach sports specific work to rest ratios, focusing on a combination of aerobic, anaerobic and ATP-CP energy systems. The ATP-CP energy is the one we use when at full speed. Untrained it only lasts 6 seconds and recovery times are massive. Soccer's top conditioning coaches are identifying this as the most important energy system. Our aim is to improve an athlete's sports specific endurance such that at any given point in a game they can perform a task at their maximum potential (i.e., sprint, tackle, pass, shoot etc.), recover and repeat without loss of speed, power and skill.

Tested with the PC Shuttle Test (4 x 30sec 10m shuttles, with 2min rest between sets, distance is measured).

Agility

Ongoing improvement and optimum performance cannot be achieved without acceleration and change of direction. It is crucially important to not just train agility, but to understand how to progress footwork into acceleration and change of direction. Athlete movement patterns and motor firing patterns have to be coached continuously to ensure ongoing improvement. This is a very different pattern from maximum velocity mechanics.

Tested with the T-Test (laser timed).

Speed

Most sprint coaches focus on drills to improve maximum velocity speed. This running style while relevant to improving efficiency is in some way contradictory to short distance sprint drills. We have established our reputation on the acceleration phase of sprinting, as well as maximum velocity. How the athlete moves over 1m is key. Most CWSC athletes have progressed to the point where we are now working on reactive speed, their ability to accelerate or change direction from audio or visual cues.

Tested with the 10m and 30m sprints (standing starts, laser timed).

Power

Power is relevant not only in the acceleration phase of sprinting, but also in regards to change of direction and the strength of the player on the ball. With power we build the dynamic core stability needed to allow a player to transfer power to the ball or from the ground to control movement. Static core stability work as favored by the fitness industry has been proven to be ineffective in performance. We specialize in ensuring the power work is directly related to how the athlete needs to transfer power in their sport. This is far more complex than most coaches realize.

Tested with the 3 Double Leg Hops (standing start, consecutive, distance measured).

What do the results of our player assessment show us about the level of our players?

Every player wants to know what her or his results mean in relation to club or national/international standards, for their age group. And we as a Club, and our coaches, want to see how much our players are improving, so that we can adjust our training curriculum and planning.

Research in Germany over a 10 year period, showed that only the players who finished in the top three for all of the tests made the professional level. We know that very few players will reach, or even aspire to reach the professional level. We do not believe this goal should be the primary focus of player development.

Our goal is to help a player develop to whatever level of play she or he desires with access to the same training that a player who aspires to play professionally needs. This is the reason that we focus at CWSC so much on skill development in the younger age groups.

How do we use player assessment results in the Club? We assess players against a Club standard which we use to relate players within the Club in any particular age/gender group, to each other. This is how we form development groups, and league teams. We also assess player results against international standards to measure our Club progress against standards which have shown what skills have supported players reaching the highest levels of play.

The chart following shows examples of how the results are related to age groups and level of ability. The first column provides the player assessment "tests" or criteria. The second column provides the age group (U10 to U13). The third column shows the standard time for those age groups in seconds. The fourth column shows the number of points the player will get with the standard time. The fifth column shows the weighting of each test in the overall assessment (based on points). The next five columns show the frequency ranges; 1 being the lowest and 5 being the highest level (in seconds).



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Survey of the frequency ranges

Criteria	Age Group	Standard (seconds)	Points	Weighting	Frequency ranges				
					I	II	III	IV	V
Game points	13	6.2	620	10	8.4	8,3 - 7,4	7,3 - 6,2	6,1 - 3,5	3.6
	12	6.2	620	10	8.4	8,3 - 7,4	7,3 - 6,2	6,1 - 3,5	3.6
	11	6.2	620	10	8.4	8,3 - 7,4	7,3 - 6,2	6,1 - 3,5	3.6
30 m run	13	4.9	135	3	4.65	4,66 - 4,79	4,80 - 4,90	4,91 - 5,15	5.16
	12	5.1	105	3	4.75	4,76 - 4,99	5,00 - 5,10	5,11 - 5,25	5.26
	11	5.5	45	3	5	5,01 - 5,29	5,30 - 5,50	5,51 - 5,70	5.71
	10	5.7	15	3	-	-	-	-	-
20m run	13	4.1	135	3	3.85	3,86 - 3,99	4,00 - 4,10	4,11 - 4,33	4.34
	12	4.3	105	3	3.95	3,96 - 4,19	4,20 - 4,30	4,31 - 4,45	4.46
	11	4.7	45	3	4.1	4,11 - 4,30	4,31 - 4,45	4,45 - 4,60	4.61
	10	4.9	15	3	-	-	-	-	-
Agility run	13	13.6	128	2	13	13,01 - 13,29	13,30 - 13,60	13,61 - 14,00	14.01
	12	14	112	2	13.3	13,31 - 13,69	13,70 - 14,00	14,01 - 14,50	14.51
	11	15.3	60	2	14	14,01 - 14,79	14,80 - 15,30	15,31 - 15,80	15.81
	10	16	32	2	-	-	-	-	-
Slalom dribbling	13	20	140	2	18.7	18,71 - 19,30	19,31 - 20,00	20,01 - 20,70	20.71
	12	20.7	126	2	19.3	19,31 - 20,00	20,01 - 20,70	20,71 - 21,30	21.31
	11	22.3	94	2	21	21,01 - 21,70	21,71 - 22,30	22,31 - 23,00	23.01
	10	24.3	54	2	-	-	-	-	-
Fast Dribbling	13	4	140	2	3.74	3,75 - 3,86	3,89 - 4,00	4,01 - 4,20	4.21
	12	4.14	126	2	3.86	3,87 - 4,20	4,21 - 4,32	4,33 - 4,60	4.61
	11	4.46	94	2	4.2	4,21 - 4,34	4,35 - 4,46	4,47 - 4,74	4.75
	10	4.86	54	2	-	-	-	-	-

Note, we have only provided age group up to U13 because from U10-13 is the age group where we have to develop the basic skills and understanding of the game. For the age group U10 we just count the points the players reach in each test. Player development just starts. We do not show frequency ranges because the differentiation between players at this age is not so significant. Development in these ages is so rapid and variable there is no merit to classify players at this early age. From U14 and up, the older age groups should have better results (faster). If they do not show results better than U13 criteria, it means they need much more intensive training to develop their skills.