

Tip of the Week!



HEADING THE BALL—AN INTRODUCTION

The skill of heading the ball has been a topic of conversation in the soccer world especially at the grass roots level where coaches and parents make their opinions known in how the skill of heading should or should not be coached to their child.

Long Term player development supports fundamental movement patterns early on in a child's development. Players' coordination and their ability to track and react is not fully developed at the younger ages and it would not be beneficial for youth prior to the age of 10 to develop the skill of heading when they must first develop their ability to respond effectively.

While concussion has become a focused discussion in sports like hockey, soccer, football etc, studies in soccer do not yet necessarily support statistically that one of the main causes of head injury is due to heading the ball vs. other reasons like contact with other elements (a kick , hitting the post, collisions).

Concussion awareness is important and Kingston United Soccer Club has adopted a policy. Coaches and parents alike need to be aware of the signs of concussion and should become familiar with this policy.

Suffice it to say, Heading is a technical skill in the game. It is used tactfully when the need to win the ball first is critical in initiating a counter attack. It is tactically effective off set plays to finish with a scoring header on net. It is equally tactically necessary when clearing and directing the ball from dangerous areas in front of the net.

If we are to experience the game as it is played we must introduce the " skill of heading"

Introducing at U10:

- Players can start with under inflated ball and progress to standard soccer balls
- Size of the soccer ball should still be age appropriate (approximately Size 4)
- Parents and other players should not take it upon themselves to coach heading the ball
- No one is to ever throw a ball at a child's head
- Youth players should not be forced to head the ball
- Players should be taught about the appropriate surface of the forehead to be used

Key factors of Heading are points to ensure that the correct technique will be applied

Key Factors for Heading The Ball:

ATTACKING HEADING

Eyes Open

Attack the Ball

Part of Head (Forehead)

Head Ball Down to Target

Meet Ball at Highest Point

DEFENSIVE HEADING

Eyes Open

Attack the Ball

Part of the Head (Forehead)

High/Wide Clearance

Meet the Ball at Highest Point

One Foot Take Off