

The curriculum for designing a practice must be appropriate for each age level. This article will focus on 16 and under.

16 AND UNDER:

This is a critical time in the player's development. Many stop playing due to other interests, lack of success, lack of playing time, poor leadership or other reasons. Players tend to lack mental toughness and self-confidence. They tend to be self-critical and struggle with their desire to be competitive or need to be more competitive. There is a need for attention and security. There is a focus on team spirit, leadership and discipline within the team.

Coach must be: Charismatic, experienced, knowledgeable, articulate, a disciplinarian, have managerial know how, a thoughtful persuader.

Technical:

- Techniques should be mastered leading to artistry and improvisation, all under game conditions.
- Individual skills covered during the warm up and/or in competitive situations.
- Increase technical speed.
- Begin specific position training.
- Technical training supports the tactical system
- Technique is still highly emphasized at this age.

Tactical:

- Increase tactical speed (decision making)
- Individual: The beginning of tactical understanding in all aspects of the game
- Small group: 3x3 and 4x4
- Position: Players start to play specific positions; attacker, center and defender. Practices should be designed to include specific position training; especially for the goalkeeper and the center.
- Defense: Base principles of press and zone defense
- Counter Attack: Understanding of advantages, spacing and transition
- Offense: Base principles of press and zone attack
- 6x5:
- Attacking the 3x2
- Attacking Storm and 4x1 defenses
- 5x6:
- Positional responsibilities
- Shot Blocking
- Team:
- Clearly defined team tactics

Physical:

- Conditioning should still take place with and without the ball
- Conditioning without the ball emphasizing water polo movements
- Flexibility: Static and dynamic
- Importance of warm up and warm down
- Swim Training: Aerobic
- Strength Training: Core, upper and lower body (emphasize overall body)
- Nutrition: Proper diet pre and post game and at tournaments
- Importance of rest and recovery

Psychological:

- Increased concentration
- Leadership and player responsibilities
- Discipline
- Respect for the game
- Establish pre-practice and pre-game routines
- Encourage players to watch high school, college and National Team games