

Stage 5: Preparing for what's next (U16-U18: Ages 15, 16, 17)

Emotional – Identifies with the game: This is the time when players develop a deep emotional connection with the game. They develop a strong passion for soccer and an identity with the game. They understand the importance of the sport in their lives and are motivated to excel. Emotionally, players become more invested in their team's success, experiencing a sense of pride and camaraderie.

Social – Balances standing out from the rest with being a teammate: Players navigate the balance between individual excellence and teamwork. They understand the connection between the two and learn to contribute effectively to their team's success while also showcasing their own abilities. They develop a greater sense of sportsmanship, understanding the importance of supporting their teammates and working collaboratively on the field.

Technical – Excels technically and tactically: Players focus on refining their skills to stand out from the rest and enhance their performance on the field. They work on mastering advanced techniques, improving their ball control, passing accuracy, shooting precision, and overall technical proficiency – preparing themselves for the next level if they choose to or simply to be the best player they can be at this point in time.

Physical – Maximizes physical fitness and characteristics: This stage is where players undergo comprehensive strength and conditioning programs to enhance their speed, agility, endurance, and overall athleticism. Practice often emphasizes the importance of physical fitness in soccer, as it directly impacts a player's performance and ability to compete at a high level.

Mental – Leadership skills from their position: They gain a deeper understanding of their role and responsibilities and learn to guide and motivate their teammates. Players are encouraged to communicate effectively, make strategic decisions, and lead by example. Regardless of if this player is a captain on their team, leadership can come in all forms and is necessary from a number of players on any given team.