

MYSA Coach Tip o' the Week: Flight Simulator

June 28, 2019

Hi Coach,

This weekly MYSA Coaching Tip o' the Week is sent to Head Coaches, to share with assistants or others as you wish. If you have a question or suggestion for a future topic let us know.

Flight Simulator

When pilots learn to fly they may use a simulator as a training tool. The simulator replicates flying a plane except that problems can be created and solved, and mistakes can be made and learned from, in a safe environment. Taking that analogy to the soccer field, when planning a training session, the primary **guiding principle should be the game** itself. What do players experience in the game and how can coaches replicate specific demands of the game in training?

Pilots may learn to fly in simulators that provide a **safe environment to practice problem-solving skills** by experiencing a variety of scenarios they might face in the air. But in soccer we too often have young athletes do coach-choreographed drills that are far removed from what they need to do on gameday, i.e. read the game and make quick decisions based on a large number of ever-changing variables.

For the pilot, the simulator presents them with realistic situations they have to interpret and conquer. If an issue happens at 30,000 feet we all want a problem-solver as well someone who has the technical skill to execute. Training on a soccer field should have a similar connection to the real thing. Coaches could help our youth players take flight if we **start with the game and work backwards** to build more realistic training activities that will transfer to gameday. That realism includes having opponents, a way to score, a variable environment, and a full range of soccer decisions to make.

Thanks for all you do.