

## CHARACTERISTICS OF THE UNDER 12 PLAYER:

In order to make practices run smoothly and be fun, it is important for us to have a basic understanding of the intellectual, emotional and physical developmental stage of the players we are coaching. Here are some typical characteristics of the Under 12 player:

- All children are maturing at different rates and are sensitive to that fact.
- Need to warm-up and stretch as muscle pulls and other nagging injuries tend to become more common.
- Typically understand elemental abstract concepts and hypothetical situations.
- They like to solve problems.
- Peer evaluation is a constant.
- Egos are sensitive.
- Coordination may depend on whether or not they are in a growth spurt.
- Technique still needs to be reinforced constantly.
- Playing too much can lead to overuse injuries.
- Playing too much and not feeling like they have a choice in the matter can lead to burnout and drop-out.
- This is the dawn of tactics!
- Keep asking the players to be creative and to take risks.
- Ask for feedback from them. They will tell you how things are going.
- Try to hand over leadership and ownership of the team to them. They will enjoy leading and it will add to the learning environment.