

# **The Limitations of Individual Training in Soccer: Why One-on-One Coaching May Not Be Beneficial**

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### **Introduction**

Soccer is a team sport that thrives on communication, individual decision-making and execution of the decisions. The essence of soccer lies in the intricate dynamics of teamwork, where players must seamlessly blend individual skills into a cohesive whole. While individual training and one-on-one coaching have their merits in various sports, they may not be the most effective approach for soccer. In this article, we'll explore why individual training in soccer is not as beneficial as it might seem, and why small group training could be a more practical and effective alternative.

### **Soccer is a Team Sport**

At its core, soccer is a team sport that relies on effective communication and collaboration among players. Successful soccer teams are built on principles of communication, decision making and execution of the decisions. Players must understand their teammates' actions, anticipate their actions, and make decisions that benefit the collective effort. In an individual training setting, these vital aspects of the game are largely absent. The player may improve their individual skills, but they may struggle to apply them effectively within a team context.

### **Limited Transfer to the Real Game**

Individual training often focuses on isolated skills such as dribbling, shooting, or ball control. While these skills are essential, they are only part of the soccer equation. The real game demands quick thinking, adaptability, and the ability to read the play as it unfolds. Individual training sessions, particularly those with only one coach and one player, may struggle to simulate the chaotic and dynamic nature of a real match. Individual training, which isolates players from these essential elements, does not adequately prepare them for the real-world challenges they will face on the field. Players can become proficient in drills, but transferring those skills to actual games can be challenging.

### **Teamwork and Decision-Making Cannot Be Simulated**

Soccer is not just about perfecting individual techniques; it's about making quick decisions under pressure and executing them within the context of a team strategy. These aspects of the game are virtually impossible to replicate in a one-on-one setting. Players need to learn how to read their teammates and opponents, communicate effectively on the field, and adjust their actions based on the ever-changing game situation. These crucial skills are best developed in a team environment.

The ability to be flexible with technical skills and adapt them to the ever-changing game situations is a crucial aspect of soccer. This adaptability cannot be adequately developed in one-on-one training sessions. Soccer is a sport that demands quick thinking, fast decision-making, and an acute awareness of the surroundings, all of which are best developed in a group setting where players can interact with teammates and opponents.

### **Small Group Training Makes More Sense**

Rather than one-on-one coaching, small group training involving around four players can be a more effective way to improve soccer skills. In a small group, players can work on various aspects of the game, including dribbling, passing, receiving, shooting and combination play. This format allows players to practice their skills within a more game-like context, fostering teamwork and decision-making.

### **Safety and Ethical Considerations**

For a safe learning environment and ethical coaching practices, it is not recommended for a coach to have one-on-one sessions with an individual player. Such situations can create vulnerabilities and potential risks for both the coach and the player. Small group training, on the other hand, provides a more balanced and secure environment, reducing the likelihood of any inappropriate conduct or misunderstandings.

### **Conclusion**

While individual training and one-on-one coaching have their place in sports development, they may not be the most beneficial approaches for soccer. This sport thrives on communication, decision-making, and executing the decisions. To truly prepare players for the challenges of real games, small group training that mimics the dynamics of a soccer match is a more practical and effective option. The investment of time and money is often better suited for small group training sessions that better replicate real-game situations.