

WHAT'S THE BIG DEAL WITH FUTSAL?

In some countries, some of which are soccer power houses, youth play only futsal and don't get to play on the big outdoor turf field until they are older. Some say this is the reason for their strength in soccer. Here in the USA we have been training players in reverse order. All players from 4 to 18 years old play on outdoor soccer fields and on futsal courts later. But this is changing as the benefits of futsal are now beginning to be recognized. Per the U.S. Futsal Federation, the complementary benefits of futsal for soccer are:



1. Philosophy of Learning / Game-based Learning

- ◆ Ever heard, "Let the game be the teacher"?
- ◆ Player understanding and performance is learned, improved and solidified by playing the game.
- ◆ The fast-paced 5v5 futsal game of continuously attacking and counter-attacking on a small and dependable surface (gym floor instead of bumpy ground) is perfect for this.
- ◆ You don't need to be coached all year round. Just play and "let the game be the teacher."



2. Tactical/Cognitive Development

- ◆ Tactical coaching at an early age helps with the development of cognitive abilities of players. It's not just coaching to win over all else, as is sometimes misinterpreted.
- ◆ Playing futsal integrates learning of techniques, tactics and decision making along with conditioning contributing to players with outstanding "game intelligence".
- ◆ Futsal's increased frequency of player action leads to rapid refinement of players' thought processes.
- ◆ Interchanging soccer and futsal training environments is an outstanding way to nurture intelligent players.

3. Creativity

- ◆ Creativity is recognized as difficult to coach.
- ◆ Creative moments occur naturally when players are under pressure, e.g. close to their goal and with little space to move.
- ◆ Creative moments like these are abundant in futsal.



4. Playing in Small Spaces

- ◆ In recent years, small sided games have been encouraged nationally. Smaller fields have followed.
- ◆ Futsal is already small sided and small pitch, but without the bumps of ground, making it the ideal environment to work on new skills and to perfect existing skills.

5. Professional Roots in Futsal

- ◆ Recognized superior coaching styles of Pep Guardiola and Vicente del Bosque were influenced by futsal.
- ◆ Messi of Argentina, Marta and Neymar of Brazil, Ronaldo of Portugal, and Iniesta and Xavi of Spain credit futsal for shaping their successful playing styles.
- ◆ Purely futsal, Falcao of Brazil and Richardinho who plays in Spain are the absolute top players of futsal today and are good models to emulate.



∴ So if you want to be a very talented soccer player then you should play futsal too.

See www.nafutsal.org for more info on playing futsal in North Alabama.