

Fitness Testing

Fitness testing is important for a number of reasons. The most important reason is that it gives the coach, trainer or player a baseline level with a variety of fitness tests on which they can improve. Fitness testing can be incorporated with any age group. The types of tests and the seriousness of the tests will obviously increase in difficulty with age, but simple and fun fitness tests can be introduced to even the youngest of soccer players. For players 12 years old and under, I would keep the fitness testing to a minimum. A few simple tests can be done to assess these players' fitness levels. Push-ups can be done for upper body strength, sit-ups for abdominal endurance, a 40 yard dash for speed, and a broad jump for leg power. This can be used as a short introduction to fitness testing that will be done as they get older. It is important with this age group to try and make the testing FUN, so don't put too much emphasis on scores.

For players 12-15 years old, fitness testing can be a little more strenuous. In addition to the previous tests, the players can test their endurance by running 4 laps around the field for time, testing vertical jump, throwing the ball in for distance, and some sort of obstacle course for agility.

For players 15-18 years old, perform the same tests, but now really emphasize scores by testing periodically throughout the year. (3-4 times) Let the athletes know ahead of time their previous scores that they have to beat. Line jumps front to back, and side to side can also be done for time. (maximum number of jumps in 30 seconds)

College aged players will probably have a strength coach that performs even more elaborate testing including a number of tests for muscular strength and power, anaerobic fitness, agility, etc..

Testing is a great way to see where your players are in terms of fitness, and to see how they improve over the years. It is a great way for players to motivate themselves to train harder and for players' confidence. It also lets a coach know which training methods are producing the best results.