U9/U10 General Characteristics:

Mental/Psychological (Cognitive)

* Lengthened attention span
* Ability to sequence thought and actions, begin to think in advance of the ball, anticipate
* Ability to remember, follow more complex instructions and solve high-level problems (e.g., simple combination play)
* Developing ability to focus and stay on task
* More understanding of time and space relations, beginning to think of when and where to move with and without the ball

Physical (Psychomotor)

* Gain tremendous amount of physical strength, endurance and power (related to body size and muscle mass)
* Motor performance includes a variety of takes that require speed, balance, flexibility, explosive strength, muscular endurance
* Pace actor is developing
* Gross and small fine motor skills becoming refined
* Children are in linear growth mode (head to toe)
* Height can approach 5 feet and weight can approach 80 pounds

Social (Psychosocial)

* Self-concept and body image are important
* Less sensitive but still dislike personal failure in front of peers
* Begin to initiate play on their own, want to play
* Becoming more serious about their play
* Included more toward small group and team activities
* Peer group attachment and pressure becoming significant
* Adults outside the family become influential
* Gender difference becoming more apparent
* Team becomes increasingly important

Components of the Game for U9/U10 Players (in priority order):

**Technical**: Running with the ball (at speed, under pressure), passing, heading, instep drive (shooting, crossing), receiving ground and air balls, throw-in, moves in dribbling, tackling, goalkeeping skills (ready stance, “W” grip, hold after save, catch shots, punt, throw, goal kicks)

**Psychological**: Working in groups of 3-6, stay focused for entire half, learn how to win/lose/draw gracefully, sportsmanship, how to handle parental involvement, communication, emotional management

**Physical**: Endurance, range of motion, flexibility, proper warm up, introduce cool-down

**Tactical**: Roles of 1st attacker and defender, roles of 2nd attackers and defenders, 2v1 attacking (simple combinations), man-to-man defending, throw-ins, restarts, set plays, setting up walls

Coaching Tips:

1. Coach is a patient and motivating teacher
2. Coach has ability to understand and demonstrate technique
3. Coaches provide environments/activities conducive to problem-solving and decision-making by the players; use guided discovery method
4. General rule of thumb is four players, one ball (except for dribbling)
5. Begin introducing principles of attack (penetration, support, and improvisation/creativity) and principles of defense (recovery, pressure, cover)
6. Sessions should be thematic (dribbling, passing, receiving, shooting)
7. Light coaching on simple technique
8. Include small-sided directional games (1v1, 2v1, 2v2, 3v2, 3v3)