

5 reasons why young players should try Futsal during the winter months



Futsal offers young players the opportunity to develop their skill and technique during the winter weather period

Mike Skubala, FA futsal elite performance manager and head coach of the England team, outlines five reasons why grassroots coaches should take their players indoors to play futsal this winter.

1) Do you want better players?

There is lots of anecdotal evidence about the role futsal has played in the development of many of the world's top players - Marcelo, De Bruyne, Neymar and Ronaldo are just a few.

Research is telling us that the constraints futsal puts on players is the reason why players get better. Futsal can help players develop their ability to play in tight situations, pass more accurately, become better at quick decision-making and understand tactics.

2) It's harder than just playing 5-a-side football indoors

If you strip futsal back to its component parts, it's actually harder to play than 5-a-side football. In futsal you can't just stand at the back and pass it and not worry about anything else. Similarly, in futsal you can't take the easy option and play off the wall and get it back. If you play by the constraints [see below] futsal is harder to play than 5-a-side football. It's because of this that it is so beneficial in terms of developing better players and better athletes.

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3) The constraints will be a challenge

If you want to give your players a new and challenging experience it is important that you stay true to the principles and constraints of futsal - otherwise you're not going to get anything different for the kids than going indoors and playing 5 a-side.

It is really important to:

- Play to lines, even if the courts are small and not off the walls
- Use futsal sized goals (3m x 2m)- if you only have letterbox sized goals put cones inside the goals to make the goals smaller
- Use the appropriate size of futsal ball: size three for U12s and size four for above.
- Stick to the laws of the game such as the number of players on court

4) Social benefits for players

Due to the quick nature and high intensity of the game the five players on court regularly swap with those on the bench. Young players can be challenged to organise this process themselves which can have a positive social benefit.

Additionally, when they are on the side they're looking, learning and developing their understanding of the game. Don't think that the resting players aren't involved - if the intensity of the practice is right the players will need the rolling substitutions.

5) Physical rewards

In futsal there are a lot of different types of physical contact and as a coach you've got the benefit of creating individual contacts by making spaces smaller and closer together. It is a great way for players to develop their skills of shielding and protecting the ball.