



HappyFeet

L E G E N D S

Why is soccer the perfect foundation sport?

Balance, control, and coordination are the three key developmental elements children need. Soccer is the best vehicle for achieving significant improvement in these three areas. Soccer demands that kids develop the ability to move both their body and a ball with their feet. This skill is not something that is easy and takes a supreme amount of eye-foot coordination.

Eye-foot coordination, as a skill, increases peripheral vision. Peripheral vision is necessary in all sports thus working to develop this essential ability. Soccer fits this bill perfectly as eye-foot coordination will make larger improvements in the area of peripheral vision. These well known athletes spent portions of their youth training soccer: Steve Nash NBA, Tim Duncan NBA, Patrick Ewing NBA, Christian Okoye NFL, Morten Anderson NFL, and Bjorn Borg Tennis star.

Soccer also has a unique ability to improve foot dexterity, as most traditional sports do not. The increase in foot dexterity will help children move along in time to their preferred sport. Additionally, all kids as young as two have the ability to kick and ball and find it particularly enjoyable. As you look at options for enrichment programs to be offered to kids, a soccer based program undoubtedly is one that should be offered alongside the other enrichment programs.

DEVELOPMENT IS COORDINATION, BALANCE AND CONTROL

The most important developmental elements a child needs to participate and succeed in sports are BALANCE, CONTROL, COORDINATION and RHYTHM. Ferdie's Soccer Magic program focuses on these elements to provide a solid foundation for growth. EYE-FOOT Coordination significantly increases an athlete's peripheral vision, and peripheral vision is what sets great athletes apart from good athletes.

Mention any legendary athlete from any team sport, past or present, and they were most likely described as having superior balance, control, coordination, and above all, superior peripheral vision. "They were so good, they played like they had eyes behind their head, and had skills to create space out of nothing". Michael Jordan- basketball; Wayne Gretzky- Hockey; Emitt Smith- football; Pele, Maradona, Zidane, Ronaldinho, Marta- soccer. Just to mention a few. Eye-foot coordination is quite possibly an athlete's most essential nutrition.

The development of eye-foot coordination begins with physical education in Pre-School. However, the typical PE diet of most of our children does not include the development of eye-foot coordination, because our big four American sports- **football, baseball, basketball, hockey** are all

eye-hand coordination sports, and most school curriculums are geared to help kids succeed in those sports.

Soccer is the sport that by its nature develops and enhances eye-foot coordination, thus **Exceptional Peripheral Vision**.

By introducing a soccer development curriculum in our schools we would be helping children develop the most essential element necessary for success in sport. The best soccer players usually are #9 and #10, (The two positions best known for creating and scoring goals) because of their superior ball-handling skills and vision, which gives them the creative edge to succeed at scoring.

1) Soccer

In most parts of North America, kids lack foot dexterity and soccer is a wonderful natural enhancer of both foot dexterity and foot-eye coordination. Don't pigeon hole this ability as only necessary for soccer either. Remember, the crux of developing a 'whole' athlete is to engross them in as much athletic stimulus as possible at a young age. Increased foot dexterity will, in time, round out a youngsters overall ability and allow them to progress in there 'chosen' sport more proficiently.

Additionally, although many North Americans find soccer to be 'boring' (although I will need an explanation on how soccer is boring, but baseball and golf are America's pastimes) it is a wonderfully athletic and tactical-based sport. Sudden bursts of explosive power, change of direction, looking two plays ahead, playing a 'forcing' based defense in which the defender uses their body/skills to change what the offensive player wanted to do – these are fantastic athletic lessons that can be filed away in the nervous system and used at a later point in any sporting activity.

From Brian Grosso
CEO of Developing Athletics Inc.

He believes soccer to be the most important sport ALL kids should play, followed by swimming, martial arts, and gymnastics.