

# WASHINGTON TIMBERS FC

## BENCHMARKS



# ALL AGES



## GAME PHASE

## PRINCIPLES OF PLAY

Attacking

Control the game by possessing the ball with a purpose to create chances.

Finish chances.

Defending

Press to frustrate opponents.

Take pride in defending structure.

Transition to Attacking

Exploit opportunity to break opponent down.

Transition to Defending

Manage the moment to deny opportunities to play forward.

# ALL AGES



## GAME PHASE

Attacking

## PRINCIPLES OF PLAY

Control the game by possessing the ball with a purpose to create chances.

## TACTICAL PRINCIPLES

1. Play forward to break opponent's lines as first option.
2. Build up to create chances to play forward.
3. Create and exploit space.

Finish chances.

1. Create space for yourself and attack the space to finish.
2. Give your teammate the best chance to finish.
3. Utilize clinical technique to finish.

# ALL AGES



## GAME PHASE

Defending

## PRINCIPLES OF PLAY

Press to frustrate opponents.

## TACTICAL PRINCIPLES

1. Apply early pressure on the ball to dictate opponent's play.
2. Capitalize on predictable play by committing numbers near the ball.
3. Maintain structure away from the ball.

Take pride in defending structure.

1. Apply quality pressure on the ball.
2. Defend as one unit.
3. Display pride in defending mentality.

# U11-12 - Transition



## GAME PHASE

## PRINCIPLES OF PLAY

## TACTICAL PRINCIPLES

Transition to  
Attacking

Exploit opportunity to  
break opponent down.

1. Play forward to exploit disorganized opponent.
2. Initiate build up if forward play is not available.

Transition to  
Defending

Manage the moment to  
deny opportunities to play  
forward.

1. Apply early pressure on the ball to dictate opponent's play.
2. Create structure away from the ball.

# U13+ - Set Pieces



## GAME PHASE

Attacking set pieces

## PRINCIPLES OF PLAY

Take advantage of opportunity to attack.

## PLAN FOR:

**Penalties** - Train prior to knockout competition.

**Finishing Opportunities, Corner Kicks, and Wide Final 1/3** - Create and practice specific plays when appropriate.

**Midfield** - Play quick when possible and initiate attacking principles.

**Goal-kicks and defending half** - Control the ball and initiate attacking principles.

**Throw-ins** - Create at least 2 options and initiate attacking principles.

# U13+ - Set Pieces



## GAME PHASE

Defending set pieces

## PRINCIPLES OF PLAY

Prevent any opportunity to attack.

## PLAN FOR:

**Penalties** - Train prior to knockout competition.

**Finishing Opportunities, Corner Kicks, and Wide final 1/3** - Organize quickly and prevent goalscoring chances.

**Midfield** - Organize quickly and initiate defending principles.

**Goal-kicks and defending half** - Prepare to initiate Press to Frustrate Opponents tactical principle.

**Throw-ins** - Organize quickly and initiate defending principles.

# SOCCER ACTIONS



## DEFENDING SOCCER ACTIONS WEB





# SOCCER ACTIONS



## ATTACKING SOCCER ACTIONS WEB



# BENCHMARKS



## DEFENDING ACTIONS U7-10:

**Angle of Approach** - Approach from an angle that cuts off opportunity and that teammates communicate.

**Balance patience and urgency** - Patient when containing the player with the ball; urgent and aggressive when moving to win the ball.

**Ball, space, player** - Recognize the location of the ball and space relative to opponent while defending.

**Body shape** - Athletic posture, knees bent, balanced weight, one foot positioned in front of the other.

**Channeling** - Force opponent to play in only one direction by angling feet and body.

**Communicate** - Communicate what you are doing through actions and voice.

# BENCHMARKS



## DEFENDING ACTIONS U11-12:

**Communicate from back to front** - Deep and central players are responsible for communicating pressing and defending structure from best viewing position; all players are responsible for communication.

**Deny opportunities** - Prioritize taking away opportunities when defending on or away from the ball.

**Frustrate opponent** - Deny everything; rush decisions; force perfection; capitalize on every mistake.

**Maintain focus** - Defend until we are attacking.

**Pack mentality** - Collective and aggressive defending mentality.

**Team shape** - Manage distances between and within lines to eliminate space and support each other.

**Touch tight** - Maintain comfortable distance between you and opponent that provides physical access and control.

# BENCHMARKS



## DEFENDING ACTIONS U13-14:

**Block shots and crosses** - Use all means necessary to block shots and crosses without handling the ball.

**Hunt in packs** - One presses and at least two cover to trap the opponent.

**Press with structure near the ball** - Numbers near the ball and immediate area to close space and deny opportunity.

**Prevent forward play** - Force them to play back or square.

**Shift and rotate together** - Everyone is connected and moves together; prevent together and cover for each other.

## DEFENDING ACTIONS U15+:

**Knowledge and pace of recovery runs** - Back and central, then ball side, at full speed until we establish team structure.

**Plan for breakdowns** - Recover to protect the middle and understand how to handle weak areas created by pressing.

**Win the 2nd pass** - Win the ball on the 2nd pass by anticipating and intercepting, tackling, or doubling the ball.

# BENCHMARKS



## ATTACKING ACTIONS U7-10:

**1v1 dribbling** - Beat opponents with individual skill to create finishing opportunities.

**Dribble forward** - Drive past opponents to break defending lines.

**Pass to a player** - Play the ball directly to the spot your teammate wants it.

**Proper first touch** - Cushion the ball toward your next action.

**Properly weighted pass** - Play the ball with enough pace to beat opponents and allow your teammate to receive.

**Receive with open body** - Open body to the field prior to receiving and receive the ball across your body.

# BENCHMARKS



## ATTACKING ACTIONS U11-12:

**Be creative** - Deceive with your body and your eyes; be unpredictable; attack without fear; balance creativity with past mistakes.

**Be decisive** - Read the game (ball, teammates, opponents, space) and execute immediately based on your read.

**Create overloads** - Use positioning near the ball to force opponents to commit additional defenders; if they don't commit additional defenders, exploit the overload.

**Execute quickly** - Utilize clean receiving, dribbling, and passing technique to execute soccer decisions faster than your opponent.

**Exploit wide areas** - Create and exploit 1v1 and 2v1 opportunities in the wide channels. Take risks in these areas.

**Find or create openings to play forward** - Play through opponents lines when you see space; move between and behind opponents to create space; be patient and move the ball to create space when it is not immediately available.

**First touch to setup finish** - Use your first touch to setup a quick and accurate strike on goal; outside of body, angled toward your striking foot, correct weight to maintain control.

**Lose your defender** - Take your defender one way and then move the other; repeat until you receive the ball.

**Through ball to space** - Weight the ball so that your teammate arrives behind the opponent with the ability to create.

# BENCHMARKS



## ATTACKING ACTIONS U13-14:

**Angle and speed of forward runs** - Run full speed on an angles that cross and break opponents lines.

**Ball striking with right and left foot** - Goal-scorers have a dominant foot but can finish with both.

**Cut back** - Serve the ball from a deep position on an angle away from goal to exploit the space between the back line and the top of the penalty area.

**Disguise movements** - Use counter movement (cuts, fakes, etc.) to deceive and confuse opponents; move outside your opponent's line of sight prior to make hard runs into space.

**Dominate center channel** - Use positioning to exploit space and always have a free player available to receive.

**Draw opponent to one side and then switch** - Create overloads in one area of the field, isolate in opposite area, and exploit the isolated area.

**Early ball on the ground** - Serve the ball from a high position on an angle toward goal to exploit the space between the back line and goalkeeper.

**Layoff** - Use a quick, one-touch layoff to set the ball so your teammate facing the goal can strike with accuracy.

**Timing of runs** - Time your movement to get a head start, arrive on time, and stay onside.

# BENCHMARKS



## ATTACK ACTIONS U15+:

**Bent or curled service** - Cross the ball so that it curls away from the goalkeeper and/or defenders.

**Heading to finish** - Body angled toward where service came from, eyes on the ball, forehead through the center of the ball, power from the core, snap through the ball.

**Utilize all surfaces of feet** - Instep for pinpoint accuracy, inside and outside to curl, laces to knuckle and for power.