

# 6 tips to empower your players

Getting the most out of your players can be hugely rewarding. While your knowledge and experience is undoubtedly the most telling influence on their development, encouraging children to find their own methods is always a good idea. Here are six tips for empowering your players, offering versatility and individuality in how they learn the game. Try some of these techniques and see how your squad develops.

## 1. Power to your players

Young footballers have a huge amount of creativity that is often stifled by adult coaches imposing limitations on what they can do. So encouraging their creativity in training will lead to better leadership skills on the pitch.

## 2. Freedom in training

Include parts of your training sessions where players are working in small groups without direct supervision. Encourage them to start their own games and assess each others' performance, discussing solutions to problems at the same time. Move around the groups but don't offer direct coaching advice. Instead, ask the players questions and get them to come up with the answers.

## 3. Responsibility on the pitch

Rather than having one captain, give players different areas of responsibility on the pitch. They then have the requirement to encourage and organise the players around them, make the relevant calls and lead by example. Try assigning an attacking captain, a midfield captain and a defensive captain, and see if it solidifies the team as a whole.

## 4. Opportunities to express themselves

Play lots of games in training and encourage players to try things in game-like situations. It is difficult to express flair in exercises where specific skills have been isolated, as players need to be able to see how they work under game-like pressure.

## 5. Praise flair and individuality

Even if things don't always work it is important to recognise that players are trying new things. Single these players out for praise. If you berate them every time they make a mistake they will very quickly stop trying anything new and will end up playing a predictable style of football.

## 6. Encourage self-assessment

The players need to be able to assess whether something they have tried has worked or not. Ask them to appraise, looking at why something did or didn't work. What would they do differently next time? This sort of self-assessment doesn't come naturally to younger players so you will need to start them off by posing questions for them to think about.

You can start by putting players in charge of the warm-ups on match day or training. You can use the [Perfect Passing](#) warm-up from my [Soccer Warm-Ups Made Simple](#) manual and tell them to set it up and play it themselves.