

WHAT IS EQUAL PLAYING TIME IN SOCCER?



We explore equal playing time, why it matters and how to use it with your team.

THEORY

Equal playing time is a simple concept: come matchday, everyone in your team gets the same time on the pitch. Adopting this approach serves two important purposes.

First, it helps to engage your team. If players spend less time on the grass than others – or don't get on at all – they may become disinterested.

Second, equal playing time helps to develop your team. This is especially true for younger age groups (where it's harder to spot potential talent). By giving everyone the same opportunity to test their skills, you can help prevent players from being left behind.

Obviously, adopting equal playing time can have an impact on your team's performance. For example, it may mean that your 'best' players see less of the action.

Remember: winning isn't everything. As a coach, your role is to help the whole team improve their skills and fall in love with the game. That's why it's essential to get everyone involved.



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HERE ARE THREE TOP TIPS FOR MANAGING EQUAL PLAYING TIME IN YOUR SESSIONS.

1. COMMUNICATE YOUR OBJECTIVE

If you're aiming for equal playing time, be transparent. Explain the concept at the start of your season – and stick to it. This helps get buy-in from players and parents.

2. CONSIDER YOUR CONTEXT

Equal playing time is a great tool for developing young players. Provide an opportunity for all players to explore the game.

3. RECOGNISE YOUR PLAYERS' NEEDS

Imagine you're playing a top-notch team and one of your players is struggling. Should you keep them on and risk damaging their confidence? Or should you take them off and reduce their time on the field? These are the questions you will need to ask yourself and as a coach recognize triggers in players emotions.

