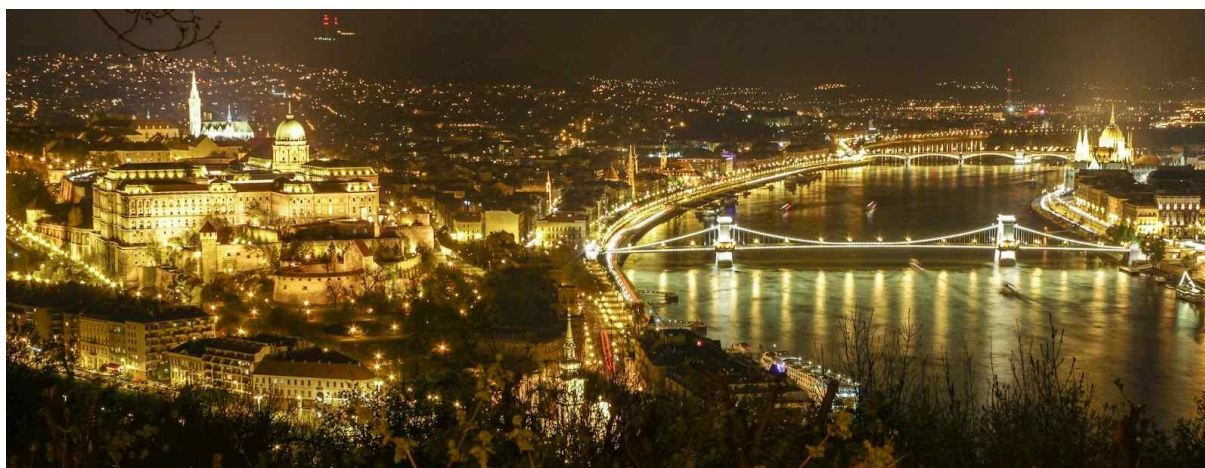


REPORT AND METHODOLOGY

TRAINING KIDS FOR FOOSBALL AND LIFE

Summer Camp at the Sport Center of the 15th district of Budapest



Budapest is the capital of Hungary, a beautiful old city which is divided into two parts, Buda and Pest, by the river Danube. Budapest has 23 districts. I live close to the 15th district near many schools and sport facilities and in the summer time a huge Sport Camp is open for use by the kids of this district.

When I visited it, I was amazed. Located on 5 hectare (acre) territory, children till the age of 14 have the opportunity to camp there every summer holidays from June till the end of August. You can find a lot of pitches and fields of many sports as well as buildings for inner activities and programmes.

In one of these buildings, I discovered two foosball tables, both of poor quality but with a little effort playable. I saw this as a great opportunity to develop a training program and maybe even small competitions for the local children. Not just for fun, or to develop technical and physical skills but also one to develop life skills of strong moral and mental attitudes as well.

When I first arrived, 16 enthusiastic children were already playing. They were having so much fun playing that I, as a teacher, knew I would have less than 2 minutes of talk. I quickly introduced myself and captured their attention by explaining how I would organizing a competition among them right away. I quickly went over the rules and explained how I would act as referee. This way not only could I teach them proper rules and etiquette but I would also see them play and be able to help them with tips to improve their skills. I then challenged them by asking if they had heard of or knew the meaning to THE WINNERS QUOTE; *"Be humble in victory and if you must lose do so with dignity"*. Using this I further elaborated, explaining how not be upset or sad should you experience a loss. Instead to learn the importance of giving ones very best effort. Then if and when one loses with a full effort to get motivation from it, learn where you could have done better and be better next time. If your hard efforts result in winning, do not be arrogant. Be happy of your success but continue to learn and to practice in order to keep your victorious ways.



I then quickly put the teams in the chart and started the matches, not wasting any more time. I also allowed them some sense of ownership and creativity by challenging them to figure out team names for themselves. This proved to be much fun and an added motivational tool.

So all set we got the competition underway. As they fought hard for the ball and the edge, I would periodically stop the game to explain the different rules. They quickly adjusted. Of course, I only used the simple and easy to follow rules for children.

Rules – short version link both in [English](#) and [Hungarian](#)

I was strengthening the respect in them toward the table, the game and each other at all times.

I explained how important it is to look after the table. To keep it clean, and treat it as their own. This way they would have much more fun and enjoyment as well as be able to improve more quickly.

During the days spent with them, I reacted on any disrespectful or unfair, unsportlike behaviour both on and about the table and the kids soon started to behave differently. They took my advice and began to focus and pay attention of my explanations of the rules and the mental game. I helped them realize that if they are focused on the game and switch off everything else they can play better, develop quicker and enjoy the game much more.

I encouraged them to respect and focus on their own skills, as well as others and I showered them with compliments. At the beginning they were rather discouraged but I changed this attitude through persistent encouragement. Always confirming and recognizing the nicely executed pass and or shot attempts and also the good blocks, good moves etc.. I did emphasise, that it was much more productive to "rather encourage your team than discourage the opponents team". To my amazement and great satisfaction they began to do this! First the children observing began using supportive words then the children competing followed. This attitude created an awesome, exciting and positive atmosphere. Everyone played their best effort and enjoyed playing whatever the outcome was. The highlight of this change in attitude and the biggest surprise for me came in the

finals. The teams helped each other encouraging the one who was down. They remembered and used my words and said "come on, don't give up, you can still win and we can still lose, do your best, focus". I was really proud and happy. This is how the new generations need to be taught to behave with each other. Not just in sport activities and games but where it really matters in *real life*. This attitude demonstrates the way the very journey to a better life. This attitude would provide for a strong, happy, creative and convergent new generation. Only we can show them ways how to live their lives better. How to deal with each other and how to enjoy the small things and accept problems as challenges to overcome and be better human beings.

If you play foosball, only the game is important. Only how partners in a team can play together, how they can strengthen the team spirit or the opposite. It doesn't matter who you play with or against. Only the ball and the aim is important, to score and reach the given goal score. To win before the opponent does it. In this game only the goals, the skills and the minds compete with each other. This focus or disconnect from outside influences can be a bridge to learning to accept others, different from us.

I would often stand by the table and show them a pass or a shot which they soon started to imitate. I really enjoyed their attention and their attempts and the happiness when they did execute the pass or shot properly. With each compliment, their eyes sparkled, searching for my eye contact and waiting for my encouraging look. The more I gave them attention, the more focus and the better games I brought out from them. It was that simple.

We often got new players who wanted to join us, as well. When they started to play and did any movements against the rules, I didn't even have to say a word. The other kids helped by them telling the rules. I was continually amazed, always smiling, always proud.

I also had some girls to play, too. They were always around but too shy and unconfident to play. Of course, I made eventually got them to play, strengthening their confidence by giving the example of myself being a champion as a woman. They played really well, I could say better than most of the boys. So for the future I do intend to get more and more girls to play.



The kids kept asking me 'when and against who they will play next'? I decided to hang the DKO (Double Knock Out, Double Elimination) chart on the wall next to the rules. I explained how to understand the chart and soon they could check it without any questions.

The closer we got to the finals, the more they started to use the time-outs. Due to the excitement of the close matches, the focus and the adrenaline rush made their hands not only sweaty but shaking too. At these 30 seconds time outs, we made some excercises and streches to clear the air, to get rid of stress and focus on the next ball even more.



The finals were always really close and amazingly exciting. We all enjoyed the games and both the winners and the runner-ups were happy to get their certificates.

Rewarding is very important for kids. To play for any rewards gives them extra competitive veins and concentration. Always figure out something you can give them.

As summer time is finished, the camp is over. My goal is to develop foosball trainings during the semesters and organize tournaments for them as well. Working on this project gives me extra strength power and I intend to make foosball grow in Hungary, faster and faster, and to give our sport many great champions and players the diverse night life in the future.

Written by Petra Koncz (multiple Foosball World Champion)

TOP TIPS for training children (short version from the report)

- Keep it fun!
- Respect the table, the game, your partners, your opponents.
- Don't talk too much beforehand, get straight into the competition or activity.
- Emphasise the importance of giving "ones best effort".
- Teach that Perfect Practice makes the Master. First „learn to do things the the correct way" then „practice diligently"!
- Teach the THE WINNERS QUOTE; *"Be humble in victory and if you must lose do so with dignity"*.
- Encourage young people to respect and encourage others while focusing on their own skills
- Partners must encourage each other, this is how teamwork works.
- Teach the principal:
"Rather encourage your team than discourage the opponents team".
- Make sure everyone is included. Often the girls will be shy and need extra encouragement but once you get them involved they can be just as good, sometimes better than the boys. So encourage the girls as well as the boys so as to instill confidence in both genders.
- Give them ownership (choosing team names, filling in tournament charts etc.).
- Use and refer to the short version of the rules
(see Basic Rules www.table-soccer.org/page/education)
- Make them use "Time-outs". Teach them how to release stress and stretch the muscles.
- Have prizes for winning. Also, a certificate for each young person keeps motivation up.

Written by **Petra Koncz** (multiple Foosball World Champion)