

What Camp Should I Have My Child Attend this Summer?

Around this time every year I get many questions about summer camps. Are they worth it? What ones are best? What should we look for? So this month's article will go a little deeper into helping to choose the right summer soccer camp.

First things first, Penn Legacy encourages ALL players to take a month OFF over the summer. We designate June as that month, so there are no club clinics or camps held in June, and no teams should be training or playing then either. (There are always a few exceptions, teams who make regionals, rescheduled league games, etc). But every kid needs that month off. It has been medically proven that the summer months are when growth spurts tend to happen, and when children's bodies recover and strengthen. It's obvious when you think about it; they are no longer cooped up in a classroom all day, the sun is out, they are often exposed to water either in a pool or the ocean, they tend to ride bikes more. Everything about the summer promotes natural healing of sore muscle, and allows the body to grow. This break from the sport is vital to their overall development.

Once July rolls around, hopefully the desire to get back training and playing is there, and that is when our Summer SoX sessions begin. These sessions are my personal favorite of all, as you can literally feel the enthusiasm and excitement from players and coaches alike. July is also the time for most camps to start up, and there are as many as there are varied.

What are the main benefits of summer soccer camps? Are they necessary?

Put simply, the summer is considered "off season" in the world of soccer. So while the phrase often heard is "champions are made in the off-season", what is really true is the off-season is a great time to improve your strengths and your weaknesses, to catch up on your skills, or to separate yourself further as a player. Summer soccer camps provide structure to any off-season training, and they are often conducted in an environment that is conducive to learning. Are they absolutely necessary? Not at all, if the player is willing and motivated to go and play with a ball, or set themselves daily goals and weekly targets, and also find a way of playing pick-up games, then all the off-season work they need is right there.

Why do Penn Legacy host Brazilian camps?

We tried using the Brazilian company Tetra Brazil about 9 summers ago, and I was immediately bowled over by a). the professional attitude and work ethic of the coaches, b). the overall quality of the instruction, and c) the enthusiasm shown by the staff to what they were doing.

Brazilian players have always been among the most technically proficient and creative the world over. To me, those are the two most important elements of any summer training camp. As a young footballer, if you can reach a point where your technical ability is superior to your opponents, then you will always have the advantage when you have the ball. Your game awareness will improve, as will your decision-making, your confidence and your creativity. Creativity is what ultimately sets players apart. But how do you coach creativity? It starts with technical ability, and every single child can, and needs, to work on improving their technical ability.

So, 10 years later, we continue to host a Brazilian camp because, in my opinion, they are the best in the business.

What if I already looking at colleges. Does the Brazilian camp still work for me or should I consider attending a college ID camp?

If you are 16 or older, and you plan to play at the collegiate level, then it is definitely time to start considering college ID camps. Go to one at a college that you may be considering, or go to a general one that will have multiple college coaches on staff. That doesn't mean that the Brazilian camps don't apply to players of 16 or older, they still remain a great option in terms of improving you as a player, but they will not have college coaches on staff of course.

**What about the other Penn Legacy camps?
got skills? Striker/Goalkeeper camp**

This is a 3 day mini-camp that spends about 45 mins each night on intensive footskills training, then lots of shooting and finishing repetitions for both strikers and goalkeepers.

Futsal Camp (new)

Held in August, this camp focuses on the futsal version of the game, which is ALL about improving 1st touch, quick decisions, and technique.

Goalkeeper Camp (new)

Run by our incredibly popular goalkeeper staff coaches, this is a camp that focuses completely on the art of goalkeeping and the unique challenges that face this unique position.

Futures Camp

For our pre-travel kids, this is the ideal summer soccer camp for the stars-in-waiting, run by the master himself, Rossi.

If you could give parents one piece of advice when deciding on a camp for their children, what would it be?

Firstly, remember that the break from soccer is an important as the training over the summer. Then, make sure it is a camp that excites your child. They should be looking forward to camp week the minute you sign them up for it. The best camps have coaches who love what they are doing and who are so committed to improving their players in the short time they have together. But it is the campers themselves that make a good camp a great one.

For more information on all our camps please go to the following:

<http://pennlegacy.org/travel-premier/camps-2016-summer.html>

Also, feel free to contact me at seamus@pennlegacy.org if you have any more questions about camps. I will gladly try to help.

Seamus.

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