

1. Coaching Principles

General Characteristics of U6 Age Group Children

- Short attention span
- Tend to one task at a time – controlling the ball is a complex task (the coach must have realistic age appropriate expectations)
- Most individually oriented (me, my, mine)
- Constantly in motion
- Psychologically easily bruised
- Little or no concern for team activities
- Do believe in Santa Claus, but will not discuss with peers



- Physical and psychological development of boys and girls are quite similar
- Physical coordination immature
- Eye hand and/or eye foot coordination most primitive at best (not ready for flighted balls)
- Catching skills not developed
- Love to run, jump, roll and climb
- Prefer large soft balls and nerf balls
- Can balance on good foot
- NO SENSE OF PACE - GO FLAT OUT!

2. Components of the Game

Fitness: balance; running; jumping; hopping; rolling; skipping; introduce the idea of how to warm-up; movement education; begin education about nutrition to players and parents.

Technique: dribbling; shooting, experiment with the qualities of a rolling ball.

Psychology: sharing; fair play; parental involvement; “how to play”; emotional management.

Tactics: where is the field; at which goal to kick.

The ball to player ratio is 1:1. : where is the field; at which goal to kick.

Please note that the components of the game are in a priority order for this age group.



3. The Training Session

The training session must be player-centered with the coach as a facilitator of the soccer experience. With this age group the coach must often “go with the flow” and be adaptable. Use Guided Discovery and the Coaches Toolkit which allow the kids to play with little coaching interruption and gets them thinking.

Throughout the season the coach allows the players to experiment and discover the ball skill being taught on their own.

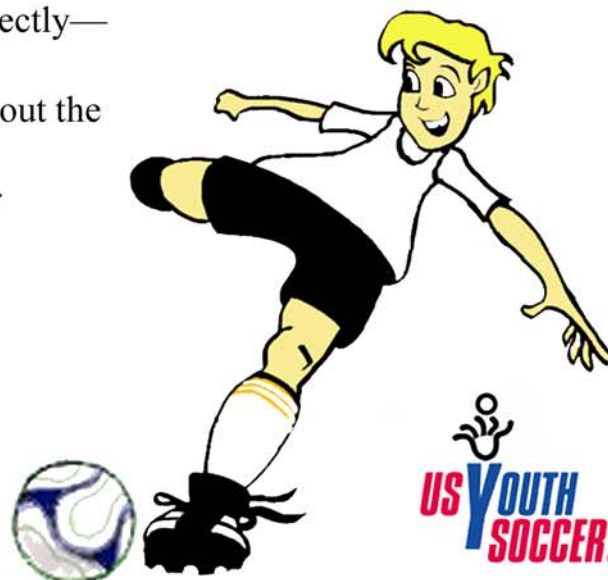
The coach should do some demonstration of the skill a few times during the session.

Also during the session call out some of the key coaching points on how to execute the ball skill.

Praise loudly and positively when a player does the skill correctly—
Positive Reinforcement!

Encourage them to try to do new things with the ball throughout the soccer season.

It is VERY important for the training session that each player has a ball.



U6 LESSON PLAN

Typical U6 Training Session



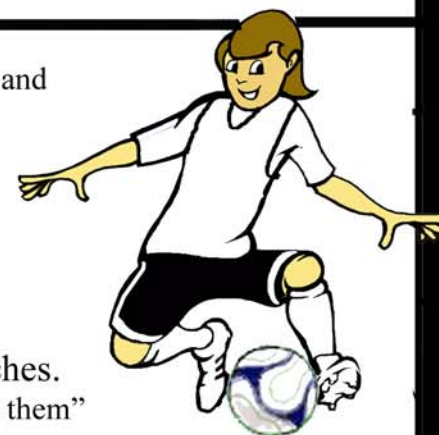
- Should not exceed 45 minutes
- Every child should have a ball
- Warm-up includes movement education problems and soccerastics (approximately 15 minutes)
- Game-like activities, mostly of a body awareness type along with some maze games (approximately 15 minutes)
- Finish with 3 vs. 3 game to small goals, no goalkeepers (approximately 15 minutes)

You should devote the end of each training session to playing 3 vs. 3 practice games. During these practice games is the best time to teach the rules of the game to the players. Remember it is the coach's job to teach the rules of soccer to the players.

You can also play fun games involving small numbers, especially 1 vs. 1, 2 vs. 1, 1 vs. 2 and 2 vs. 2 leading up to your final activity of 3 vs. 3.

It is important to ensure each child has a ball and to focus on fun games. The benefit of the increased number of touches on the ball is irreplaceable. Coaches should be well prepared and have a selection of games at your disposal, while keeping in mind these young children have short attention spans!

The Game: Preferably these should be unstructured pick-up game style matches. If scheduled matches must occur then every effort must be made to reduce the "us versus them" mentality and outcome based expectations that surround too many youth games.



Role of the Coach:
facilitator, good humor,
friendly helper, organizer,
stimulator, ability to see soccer
from a child's
perspective,
patient,
can demonstrate
movements and
simple skills,
enthusiastic
and imaginative.

License Recommendation:
U6/U8 Youth Module Certificate
or "Y" License.

Please ask your club director
to arrange an age appropriate
clinic by calling your state
association Technical Director.

