

Soccer Coaching

5 and 6 Year Olds

Being a soccer coach for this age group does not require soccer skills. All you need is a positive attitude, a willingness to be silly (even at the expense of embarrassing yourself), and of course a little patience. The goal for this age group is to introduce them to the basic concepts of soccer (dribbling, kicking, running, scoring goals!), help them improve their social skills, and most importantly...Have Fun!

The day for practices should first be a day that you the coach can make without causing yourself constant inconveniences, second a day that most of the players (parents) can attend. There will always be a schedule conflict where "such and such day/time is not good for me." You can ask the parents what days are best for them, but you need to pick the day. Everyone ultimately will adjust their schedules to make it work for them.

At your first team meeting/practice is a good time to let the parents know a little about yourself and what they can do to help. Parents will usually help out if asked....they just need a little "push." Let the parents know that their assistance would be greatly appreciated and that you will need their help. You will also need someone to be the "Team Mom" to help organize the snack schedule, team pictures, trophies, etc. Make sure you ask if someone is willing to do this for you.

Remember, for this age group most of the parents are new to this just like you/their kids.

Make sure the parents know what they need to bring to each practice/game:

- Cleats/athletic shoes
- Shin guards
- Water bottle

PRACTICES

This is probably where you said "I don't know the first thing about soccer, how can I be the coach?" Well, if you know how to run, kick a ball, have fun, and can show someone how to do these things.....then you can be a coach!

Practices for this age group is about improving social skills, improving coordination, learning the concepts of soccer, about having fun, and numerous other things which you will discover during your first season. These things are accomplished through games that are played that inadvertently teach them the skills they will need to play soccer.

Names:

On the first day of practice you should get all of the players to sit in a semi-circle in front of you and have them tell you their names. At the second practice you will need to do this again so you can make sure you know their names. Make sure the other players are listening so they can remember them too. Next practice (or at the end of the second practice) you "try and

remember” their names by miss-naming them (don’t look or be serious when you do this) and see if the other kids correct you. The kids generally get a kick out of this and they will soon know each other’s names quicker.

Rules:

On the first day of practice ask them some questions:

- Has anyone ever played soccer before?
- Does anyone know how to play soccer?
- Do you use your hands?
- How do you score goals?
 - Do you throw the ball into the goal?

This gets them thinking and involved in what you are talking about. Let them know that you only use your feet; that you kick the ball, and that you dribble the ball with your feet to get it from one end of the field to the other and that the object of the game is to score goals.

SHOW THEM HOW TO DO THIS!

One of the players can show everyone else too!

Warm-ups:

The warm-ups you and I remember (jumping jacks, wind sprints, etc.) do not apply for this age group.

Get the players to warm-up with their ball.

- Toe-tops
 - Place the bottom of their foot on top of the ball and alternate feet doing this faster and faster.
- Tick-Tock
 - Place the ball between their feet and have them knock the ball back and forth between their feet.

THEY WILL HAVE TROUBLE WITH THIS...IT’S OKAY. LET THEM KNOW THAT IT IS HARD AND SHOW THEM YOU HAVE TROUBLE TOO!

- Run in place.
- Jump up and down and act silly.

The idea here is to get them going a little bit and get used to “getting ready” to practice. If you do the same warm-up exercise every week the players will actually start the warm-ups themselves when you call them over to start warming up.

Have them touch their toes and stretch up to the sky as far as they can. Stretching at this age is not recommended other than the token stretches above.

Remember, this age group has a short attention span. Have a back-up plan in case the game/drill you have chosen is not working. They will love to just throw the ball in the air and try and catch it.

If all else fails a good game of Duck, Duck, Goose or Freeze Tag can keep them running and work on their motor/coordination/listening skills.

Most importantly...HAVE FUN! If they see you having fun...they will too!

Some Sample Practice Plans are attached for your use.

Also, look at these websites for games to play and instructional information:

- <http://www.soccerxpert.com/u6-u8-soccer-drills.aspx>
- http://www.mayouthsoccer.org/coaching/practice_plans_u6.aspx

or call your Coordinator or other coaches.

GAMES

At U6 we do not provide referees. This means that the two coaches will have to share the duty. Please read the rules and follow the guidelines below:

- Take a whistle and a stop watch to games as each team should provide a “referee” for half of each game. As coaches you can do this or have a parent do it. The “referee” needs to keep track of the time (two 16-minute halves with a 5 minute break between) and point in the “direction to throw the ball in” and say the color of the team who should be throwing in the ball. Teams will not switch ends at any point. You or parents can help chase the out of play balls.
- **Only** when you do not have “official” Referees, are the coaches allowed on the field during the game to set the players in the correct spots. To keep the game moving you are encouraged to help them. Note: Only one coach from each team is allowed on the field. We want to have more players than coaches on the field. Be sure to move off the field when the game is in play (some of them can kick a “mean” ball).
- Be sure that games start on time and stay on schedule. We have many games each Sunday and the next teams will be ready to play at their scheduled time.
- Know the rules of play – Read the rules and have them with you just in case so that the players learn them as they go. These rules can be found on the Federal Way Soccer website under “About FWSA”, “Mod Club”, “Mod Club By-Laws & Policies” and the click on Policy #1 U6 Rules.

“Laws of the Game Made Easy” is an on-line book of easy to understand soccer rules. It is highly recommended you take some time to review these rules at

<http://www.calsouth.com/data/Downloads/Referees/LawsoftheGameMadeEasy.pdf>