

# **U5/U6 Division**

## Recreational Program



Coaching  
Manual



## Coaching in the Under 5 and Under 6 Age Group

### U5/U6 Coaching Considerations

The qualities of a good coach in the U5 and U6 age group are patience, good humor, and the willingness to see the world through a child's eyes. Make sure you are dressed like a coach (no jeans or suits) and be prepared to play with the children, demonstrate activities, act silly and become involved with the session.

At games try to stay off of the field as much as possible. The more the players figure out by themselves the better they will become.

### Game Application

<b>Game Form</b>	3 v 3 or 4 v 4
<b>GK Status</b>	Goalkeeper should not be used
<b>Field Size</b>	Recommended field size is 20-30 yards long by 15-25 yards wide.
<b>Ball Size</b>	3
<b>Restart Method</b>	When the ball goes out of bounds (sidelines), the game is restarted with a kick-in or throw-in. This is a club choice but a kick-in is the preferred method.

### U5/U6 General Developmental Characteristics

The developmental characteristics of U5 and U6 players will have a major impact on the design and content of your training session. The session should include fun activities that encourage children to explore their physical abilities as well as emphasizing exploration and experimentation with the rolling, spinning and bouncing qualities of the ball. There should be no activities where players wait in line to perform an activity or movement. U5/U6 General Developmental Characteristics are as follows:

- Short attention span
- Most are individually oriented (me, my, mine)
- Constantly in motion
- Psychologically bruised very easily
- Little or no concern for team activities
- Physical and psychological development of boys and girls is quite similar
- Physical coordination is immature
- Eye/hand and/or eye/foot coordination is most primitive at best
- Love to run, jump, roll and climb
- Catching skills are not developed
- Can balance only on good foot
- No sense of pace – GO FLAT OUT!!!

### U5/U6 Age Group Practice Objectives

- Coaching Emphasis: Fun!
- Technique Dribbling, changing direction while running with the ball, shooting and kicking with different surfaces.
- Psychology Sharing, fair play, how to “play”, emotional management



- Fitness Balance; running; jumping; coordination; movement education
- Tactics Players should be aware of the direction they are attacking, where they are on the field and be encouraged to be ball-orientated (always wanting to be involved in the action). Team shape can be addressed but under no circumstances should players be put in positions or made to stay in a certain area.

## U5/U6 Coaching Session

Children at this age love to use their imagination when they play, therefore keep this in mind when designing your session. Activities should be short and simple as a U6 player's ability to stay focused is very limited. Give brief directions and repeat them when necessary. The main focus of every session should be individual activities with the ball, especially dribbling. A U6 player thinks about themselves 100% of the time and cannot conceptualize passing the ball or working with a teammate.

- Session duration: 45-60 minutes
- All players must have a ball
- Necessary coaching equipment – Cones, pinnies, pump, extra balls
- Session progression – Warm up, fun games, small-sided games
- Player equipment – Ball, cleats, appropriate clothing, shin guards, water bottle
- If cold and wet – cancel the practice session. We are trying to persuade young players to fall in love with the sport. Making players practice on cold days encourages them not to continue with the sport.

## Game Day Responsibilities

- Arrive at the field at least 15 minutes prior to the time you told the players to arrive.
- Make sure you bring player cards, emergency medical information and medical release forms for each player.
- Check the playing surface and equipment for safety e.g. objects on the field, goals are secured and make sure the game ball is properly inflated
- Organize a warm up for your players – lots of movement – not just kicking on goal.
- If you have a referee – organize the players for referee check-in – if not arrange which coach or parent will be the referee.
- The parent should act as a referee but only to help point players in the right direction and to help with in and out of bounds calls.
- Let the players play. Coaches should be off the field as much as possible.
- Coordinate your player rotation to make sure all players receive equal playing time.
- Make sure all your comments are very positive.
- Make sure each player drinks water and stays hydrated.
- Players should be aware of the direction they are attacking and team shape can be addressed. Players can be set up in a triangle shape to start the game and at other natural breaks (kick offs, goal kicks). However, during the game players must be allowed to run around freely – bunch ball is a natural occurrence.
- Positions are not necessary and although you may be tempted to leave a player back to defend the goal this is developmentally inappropriate.
- U6s must learn to attack as a team and defend as a team.
- Under no circumstances should children be made to stand in a position, stand on a line or in a certain area.
- If cold and wet – cancel the game. We are trying to persuade young players and parents to fall in love with the sport. Making players play or parents watch in cold and wet weather discourages future participation.



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