

U6 Division Manual

Resources and Materials

Introduction

The U6 division provides an introductory soccer experience for the youngest one and a half years of our league. It is run by the parents of those children, for those children. In many cases it is also the first “coaching” experience for the parents. It is the goal of our association to provide an enjoyable experience for both the parents and players so that they will return to our program each season.

The purpose of this clinic is to prepare our volunteer coaches for the duties expected of them and to make them aware of their responsibilities for teaching safe and proper techniques to young athletes.

Administrative

Here's a list of things our group will be responsible for:

- All coaches must have background checks in accordance with Township regulations. If you set foot on the field without such a badge be prepared to answer to a judge. This is a township matter, not just a league matter.
- Field and equipment must be ready for each session before players arrive
- First Aid & contacting emergency services (we administer bandages, ice packs & have phones that reach 9-1-1)
- Lightning – for this division one flash means we're done for the day (off the field for 30 minutes after the last flash)
- Only registered players are allowed to participate. Registered means they show up on league presidents list.
- Distribute team shirts
- Collect candy sales or buy out money, plus late fee where applicable.
- Code of ethics forms
- Organize players for Photo Day
- Make sure all players are aware of the schedule (take attendance)
- Reschedule rainouts
- Help with 50-50 ticket sales or other fundraisers
- Get players to end of season skate party (not held every year)

Teaching Proper Techniques

Use the following checklist of things to consider when teaching a technique:

- Consider what is appropriate for the age group you are coaching
- Learn everyone's names & make sure the players learn each other's names
- Consider differences in maturity and experience within the age group
- Do the kids understand you? Are you getting your point across? If you are speaking for 60 seconds it's too long for this group
- Keep techniques simple and basic
- Practice the technique then incorporate into a game
- Use methods that allow each participant to achieve success
- Get everyone involved and keep them involved. One ball per player for this group.
- Avoid frustrating phrases like “It's easy!” and “Why can't you do it?”
- Allow time for individual instruction
- Use better skilled players to demonstrate
- Find some portion of the execution of the technique that a player did well and give him or her a compliment
- Show how specific parts of skills/techniques lead to the whole or complete skill
- Players should be tired at the end of the session
- If something you wanted to do isn't working, move on

- End on a positive note

Organization of Practice Topics to be Covered

The key to a successful practice is making sure every child is involved and there is no idle time. When planning practice sessions consider the following:

- Site / Age group / Roster size
- Experience factor
- How many times to practice each week? (ONCE) When? (SATURDAY AM)
- How long to practice (60-75 minutes)
- Skill to cover
- Games to use
- Break your practice down- team meeting, warm-up, skills, drills, fun time, cool down
- Set goals- what does each practice lead to...evaluate your practices at the end of each week...comments
- Team information, phone numbers, medical release, consent forms (*coach should have access to at all times*)
- Keep practices moving, kids easily become bored and cause discipline problems.

How to Conduct Your Practice

When running practice sessions consider the following:

- If you fail to plan, plan to fail
- Start on time
- Safety check – field, equipment, first aid kit, ice, cell phone, contact info
- Brief team meeting-preview today's practice
- Warm-up (5 mins stretch and warm muscles) – teach for life
- Make sure players know each other's names
- Practice specific skills- individually and with partners (demonstrate)- 10 minutes
- Team activities- 15 minutes
- Be flexible. Adjust complexity of activities.
- Station work- players spend 4-5 minutes at each station working on a specific skill, moving to the next station at the sound of the whistle- 20 minutes
- Water/rest break- 5 minutes
- Use fun game incorporating skills and activities used earlier- 15 minutes
- Brief review- tell when next practice will be, end on a positive note- say something positive about each player
- Make sure you are aware of any special medical needs
- Recruit helpers
- Take advantage of training
- Watch other teams practice

Session Planning and Timing

1. Friday Night Check – One coach should check fields the night before. Repaint lines as needed. Check shed at field for missing or damaged equipment. Verify first aid kit is stocked. Check for holes that need filling & puddles that need spreading.

2. Game Day – Coaches should get to the field at least 20 minutes before practice starts to coordinate the day's events & prepare the area. Safety requires checking the fields & equipment. Picking up trash may be required. Recheck lines & holes. Bring cell phone & phone list. Get first aid kit and equipment from shed. Setup cones/disks for today's activities. Have FTSA soccer balls (size 3) out for those who do not have a ball. (If applicable, unlock bathrooms)

3. Paperwork - Get a parent setup for checking paperwork. Take attendance so we know who is on top of our schedule & who needs calling. We will have instructions to hand out and money to collect.

4. (8:25 – 8:30) Gather Players – as players arrive have them collect at one place and keep them busy. If it is real early have them help with field preparation. Talk with them. Learn names. Find out what they liked about last

practice, how school is going etc. Do they know any good jokes? Don't start practice early. Each player should have a ball, either their own or one from the league. If they own a ball encourage them to write their name on it.

5. (8:30 – 8:33) Snake Run – at exactly 8:30 begin a snake run. Start by having players put balls in a pile. Break into groups of around 15-20. Keep it to a jog. Slower players can cut corners & higher energy players can cover more ground. Have them get their knees high. Purpose is to get some heat into muscles & right attitude for starting practice.

6. (8:33 – 8:38) Warm-Ups / Stretching - spend about 5 minutes on exercises. At this age they need to develop the habit of warming up much more than needing the actual warm-up. We are teaching them "for life" so let's develop the proper habits. Keep sheet of exercises handy. Same or similar exercises every practice to keep things moving.

7. Coaches not doing the exercises should be checking setup for activities.

8. (8:38 – 8:40) Split up - Get balls, split players into three to five groups. Number of groups will depend on number of players, coaches, drills and time. This should be determined before the session begins. Some weeks divide by colors other weeks mix them up. Determine ahead of time where you will work in a water break. The players should rotate leaving the coaches at the station for the day. Leave enough time for a quick water break and ten to fifteen minutes of small sided games.

9. (8:40 – 9:15) Stations - Focus is on having fun & touching the soccer ball with our feet. Remember one on one is best & attention span is near zero. After a set amount of minutes players rotate to next station (allow a minute to move the players around). Coach stays at same station the whole time. Make sure you know what the lesson is & how to evaluate & correct. Remember: compliment, correct, compliment. "good throw Sue. I think if you reached back further the ball would go even further. Can you try that? You're really working hard today." Watch what works & doesn't work. Talk with the other coaches to improve things for next session & next season. Don't over instruct. Your job is to maintain safety & entertain. Mix in water & bathroom breaks as needed.

10. (9:20 – 9:35) Small-Sided Games. No keeper. Keep things moving. Very few rules. Few or no subs. Ensure that all players are involved and moving.

11. (9:35 – 9:37) Wrap Up. Brief talk with players. What did we learn? Schedule for next week. Candy \$. Make sure you end with pep talk.

12. (9:37 – 9:40) Fun Run. Let any players with extra energy show off by doing some running. They like to run to far away things and back. Send them home tired.

13. (9:40– 9:45) Clean up & discuss – Coaches take a ways from that session. Anything for next session? U8's have games that start at 9:45.

Notes: (1) make sure all players learn coaches & other players' names. (2) Incorporate learning the basic rules of soccer into drills & games. (3) Be prepared & organized. (4) Stay in charge. (5) In case of emergency do not panic. (6) Remind players about water & bathroom breaks. (7) Keep every activity fun & high energy. (8) Be silly. (9) You have 60-75 minutes to wear them out, don't waste any time. (10) If you have any questions about proper soccer techniques please ask for help before or after practice. (11) Taking the F-License course is a great way to learn all the basics. (12) Check the league web site frequently (www.florence-soccer.com). (13) Any questions call your league president, Cathy Anthony. (14) To check on game cancellations due to weather check web site.

U6 Soccer Warm-ups

This age group is very flexible and warms up almost instantly. However, we want the players to develop the habit of starting athletic activities by warming up so that they will continue to do so as they get older and have a greater need for warming up. Where possible we will integrate soccer activities into the warm ups.

Snake Run

- Short run to get the blood pumping and start warming up the muscles.
- Coach jogs a weaving path while players follow in a single file line.
- Faster players will track coach's moves while slower players may cut corners to keep up.
- Can be done while dribbling a soccer ball if the players dribble well enough that they don't scatter all over.
- Go for 100 - 200 yards.

Pass Around

- Players pair up and stand back to back with one ball per pair.
- While staying back to back player with ball twists and hands ball to partner at waist level.
- Player receiving ball moves ball to other side of body and passes it back to partner.
- From above ball would be seen going in a circle around the pair.
- Repeat 20 times, reverse direction and do 20 more.

Over- Under

- Pair up and stand back to back with one ball per pair.
- While staying back to back player with ball hands ball to partner straight over their heads.
- Player receiving ball passes it back to partner between their legs.
- From the side ball would be seen going in a circle over-under the pair.
- Repeat 20 times, reverse direction and do 20 more.

Rocking Sit-ups

- Pair up and sit on ground, legs straight, feet-feet with one ball per pair.
- First player lays down on their back touching ball to ground as far behind their head as they can reach.
- First player sits up & hands the ball off to the other player high above both players heads.
- Second player now lays down touching ball to ground as far behind their head as they can reach.
- Repeat until each player has done 10 sit-ups.

Toe Taps

- One ball per person.
- Ball is placed between feet with middle of ball between toes.
- Place one foot on the ball with all weight on the other foot.
- Player jumps slightly, foot that was on the ball comes off and player lands on that foot.
- After the one foot lands, the other foot taps the top of the ball.
- Player always have at least one foot in the air
- Repeat 20 times

Boxing

- One ball per person.
- Ball is placed between feet with middle of ball between insteps.
- Weight is on one foot the other foot is slightly in the air.
- Player jumps lightly.
- Foot that was in the air lands to the side of the ball leaving a 6-inch gap.
- Using the instep of the foot that had been on the ground, player taps the ball toward the foot that is now on the ground.
- Repeat 20 times.

Flamingo Stand

- This exercise is for strengthening the muscles around the knee joint, which is an area of vulnerability for soccer players.
- Stand on left foot & bend right leg so that shin is parallel to ground.
- Tuck bent leg behind knee of other leg.
- Bend the leg player is standing on slightly.
- Hold for 5 seconds.
- Switch sides.
- Repeat.

Light Bulb Turn

- Stand on toes reaching right hand as high as possible
- Turn hand clockwise 10 times the counter clockwise 10 times
- Switch hands
- Repeat 2 times

Resources

The websites below are good resources for finding drills and games for players at this age group and for the years to come.

<http://www.freeyouthsoccerdrills.com/free-soccer-drills.html>

<http://www.coachingsoccer101.com/drills.htm>

http://www.footy4kids.co.uk/soccer_drills_and_games_for_very_young_children.htm

<http://www.gamesforsoccer.com/>

<http://www.surefiresoccer.com/>

The specific games below have been used in the U6 program in the past and were very successful.

Don't crash the car

Preparation

All you will need is the kids to have a soccer-ball each and a coned off area big enough for the amount of kids you have to dribble around comfortably.

Explanation

You begin by telling the kids that this game is called 'don't crash the car'. Get the kids a soccer ball each and get them close to you. The object of the game is not to crash your car.

- "What do you think the car might be?" The kids will respond eventually with the soccer ball.
- "How do you think we could crash our cars?" By dribbling in to other people or falling off the edge of the cliff (outside of coned area).

The first command you give is:

- 'Green Light' ~ this means the kids dribble their soccer balls around without bumping into others or going off the cliff edge.
- 'Red Light' ~ the kids stop dribbling and put one foot on top of the ball and remain still.
- 'Yellow Light' ~ the kids will assume this means go slower however it means go faster whilst still keeping control of the soccer ball.

***** *In all these types of youth football drills you need to keep the coaching points going. I.e. inside/outside of foot to dribble and keeping the ball close to you.******

- 'Honk your horn' ~ just for fun but the kids love it. Get the kids to sit on their ball and honk their imaginary car horn and make loads of noise!
- 'Red light Turn' ~ the kids know that red light means foot on top of ball. The turn comes when they roll the ball behind them and follow the rolling ball. This is coaching them to do the drag-back turn.
- 'wind-shield wipers' ~ the kids stop, put one foot on the ball and move the ball from left-to-right.

- 'Gas station' ~ tell the kids that we're running out of gas and need to find the gas station. Get the kids to dribble over to one corner of the area and on your command the kids will do toe-taps on the ball which is pumping gas into the cars.

- 'Car wash' ~ all of the cars are filthy dirty and need a clean. Get the kids over to another corner of the area and get them to wash their cars by knocking the soccer ball with the inside of both feet from side-to-side.
- 'Police chase' ~ this one's great. The coach is the police-officer who tries to chase the kids. The kids to evade you, will do the red-light turn to face away from you (change direction) showing them that it could work in a game. Coach, make a police siren sound, the kids love it.

Progression

There are plenty of little things you could add to make this game suitable for your own team. New skills, turns and tricks are always good.

Coaching Points

- > Make sure the kids use little touches and demonstrate what happens if you kick the ball too far in a game.
- > Make sure the kids use the inside and outside of their feet whilst dribbling - not their toes.

Noodle Monster

All you need for this drill is two of those pool noodles, cones and an area to dribble in.

Set up a coned in area large enough for the kids to dribble in. Tell them that you are the Noodle Monster and will be chasing them around swinging your noodle arms trying to hit their ball. There is no consequence for getting "caught" as the idea is simply to keep the kids moving. After a minute of them dribbling around remind them of ways to get away from the noodle monster, stop the ball and drag, inside/outside of foot, change of speed or shielding. After another minute goes by reinforce another skill. Allow time for each child to be the Noodle Monster, because they will all want to do it.

Speed Racer

Dribbling for younger players

Create a large circle with enough cones for each player. Players find and stand next to Cone. On coach's whistle, the players race around the track and try to be the first one back to their cone.

Progression- tell players they can go in any direction. This will force them to keep their heads up

For fun, have them make car noises..vroom-vroom, honk, beep-beep.

Shark and Minnows/ Tag / Freeze Tag

There are many variations to this game. Each group will help you determine progression, skill level and rules.

Dribbling with soccer ball (or start with no soccer balls and progress to dribbling with soccer ball)

Setup- create a grid 20 yards X 40yards. Start with one player in the middle holding a soccer ball under his/her armpit (this person is "it". The rest of the player's line up on one end of the grid with a soccer ball at their feet.

The object of the game. ON THE COACHES WHISTLE, players dribble from one end of the grid to the other without being tagged by "it". If a player is tagged they ALSO become "it". Dribblers stop when they get to the other

end of the grid. In the beginning - it is 10 dribblers to one "tagger". The next time back it might be three taggers to 7 dribblers. Eventually the taggers outnumber the dribblers

COACHING POINTS - heads up, check with the ball and then explode.

Soccer Golf

With all of the players on a marked line lay hula hoops all over the field. Each hoop, based on distance and size will have a value. The object is for the kids, from the line, to kick the ball and have it land in the hula hoop. Try to have them spread out and all kick at once so no one has to wait. When all balls have stopped rolling have the kids run to retrieve and dribble back. Reinforce what part of the foot should be used for each type of kick, instep vs. laces.

Be prepared to allow them to do hula hoop, but make them "score" first.

Trick or Treat

This drill is perfect for any late October session. Line up and separate each player with a ball across a line. Coach stands ~25 yards away with roughly 50 disc cones. On your mark have all players dribble to you, say "trick or treat", and dribble back to put their cone down. Repeat. If players are dribbling out of control or just kicking and running make them do a trick. Remind them to work on dribbling with their heads up and avoiding others. Mix in variations such as, right foot-left foot only, dragging and speed.

Dinosaur Eggs

Set up three or four "home bases" (squares) with cones roughly 2-3 yards wide spread fairly far away from each other. Break up the players into teams and have each team get together in their home base. Place all the balls in the center of the space between the home bases. On the coaches command the teams are free to gather as many soccer balls as they can into their home base. Team with the most wins. Players are allowed to "steal" from each other in playing area, but not from home base. Bring extra balls for this game.