

U6 Coaching Resources – Garrett Youth Soccer

Most of the information listed in this document are summarized/taken from the United States Youth Soccer Player Development Model.

U6 players are still primarily developing their basic motor skills. Emphasis should be put into this, with the addition of the ball being gradual and not necessarily the primary focus.

Coaches should use a player-centered approach to their coaching. At this age, players typically play for themselves and don't quite understand the concept of teammates or playing with others on the field.

Equipment within the shed can be used by coaches for practice.

General Characteristics of the U6 Age Group

- Catching skills not yet developed
- Constantly in motion – love to run jump, roll and climb
- Eye-hand and eye-foot coordination is raw – not ready for bouncing or flighted balls
- No sense of pace – go flat out
- Physical coordination is immature – can balance on dominate foot
- Controlling the ball is a complex task
- Prefer large soft balls and foam balls
- Only understand simple rules
- Individually oriented (me, my, mine) – little or no concern for team activities
- Believes in Santa Claus, but will not discuss with peers – lofty imagination
- Physical and psychological development of boys and girls are quite similar
- Psychologically, easily bruised – need generous praise
- Short attention span – tends to one task at a time
- Limited understanding of time and space

Components of the Game for the U6 Age Group*

Fitness: Introduce the idea of how to warm-up and movement education. Begin education about nutrition with players and parents. Balance, walking, running, how to start and stop, jumping, hopping, rolling, skipping, changing direction, bending, twisting, and reaching.

Technique: Dribbling (stop and start) and shooting. Experiment with the qualities of a rolling ball.

Psychology: Sharing, fair play, parental involvement, “how to play” and emotional management.

Tactics: Where is the field? The concept of boundary lines, at which goal to shoot and playing with the ball wherever it may go.

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

Typical U6 Training Session

- Should not exceed 45 minutes.
- Every child should have a ball.
- Free play or a warm-up, including movement education challenges and soccernastics – approximately 15 minutes
- Game-like activities, mostly body awareness and maze games – approximately 15 minutes
- Finish with a 3v3 game with two goals, no goalkeepers – approximately 15 minutes

Coaches should devote the end of each training session to playing 3v3 practice games. During these practice games is the best time for the coach to teach rules of the game to players. Fun games involving small numbers can be played, especially 1v1, 2v1, 1v2 and 2v2 leading up to a final activity of 3v3. It is important to ensure that each child has a ball and to focus on fun games. The benefit of the increased number of touches on the ball in those games is irreplaceable. Coaches should be well prepared to have a selection of game-like activities planned, while keeping in mind these young children have short attention spans.