

Crash Course for coaching U6 Soccer

5 Rules to Live By

1. You don't need to know much about soccer. Pick a game kids love and incorporate a soccer ball. Tag, gather the cones, red rover, animal sounds, body parts, freeze, get the coach, etc. These all become "soccer games" when you simply add a ball.
2. Don't worry too much about passing, positions on the field, or proper technique. Demonstrate the correct way to perform a skill and then praise them highly when they actually do it, but don't waste practice time with repetitive technique drills. Pick "coaching moments" when you can make a point that helps the whole team.
3. Kids want their own ball and don't want to share it. Each child NEEDS to bring a ball to practice. Every child should have a ball at their feet constantly during practice. Avoid drills that use lines and always keep the kids busy, their attention spans are short or nonexistent! It is VERY important that practice time consists mostly of every child having a ball at their feet at all times.
4. Emphasize players spreading out and not taking the ball from their own teammate. This is the one coaching point you should be making 100 times a game and constantly when you scrimmage during practice. (Every time you get possession of the ball!) Be patient and keep stressing these two points and you'll be amazed at the results.
5. Always play with the kids. If you're having fun, so are they.

The bottom line is to get to know the kids, pretend like you are a kid, and you'll have a great time. These games usually look like an amoeba is following the ball around the field. One important note is to remember to have good sportsmanship. If your team is crushing the other team, then make adjustments to help level the playing field. Remember the shoe could always be on the other foot!

RULES and INFO

Ball: Size 3

Players: 4 at a time on the field. NO Goalkeepers. Each child on a team will receive an equal amount of playing time during the game/season. A player should not play the entire game unless there are only four players present.

Fouls: Coaches will officiate all games. All fouls result in a free kick with the opponent at least five yards away. If a player is repeatedly committing fouls, his coach should remove him from the game and explain to the child (and his or her parents) why their behavior is not acceptable in the game.

Duration of Games: Games consist of four 10 minute quarters with a two minute break between quarters and a five minute half time break. Designate an assistant coach or parent on the sideline as your official timekeeper.

Substitutions: Can be made on any dead ball

Throw-Ins: Most kids will be unable to perform throw ins at this age. Having a child kick in at this age is much simpler. The possession will switch from whichever team kicked it out. Spread players out if necessary to have room to kick in.

Goal Kicks: A goal kick is awarded when the ball is last touched over the end line by an offensive player. The kick is taken from the goal line and the opposing team should be on their own half.

Corner Kicks: A corner kick is when the ball is last touched over the end line by a defensive player. There are no corner kicks at this level. Simply have a child with the offensive team kick it back in.

Kick Offs: The coach will initiate play by placing the ball at the center of the field. The first player to kick the ball should try to kick the ball to one of his teammates to start the possession. The other team should stand outside of the center circle. Kick offs happen at the start of each quarter and after each made goal. Possession should alternate each quarter.

Practice Ideas

There are tons of ideas to be found online by searching U6 soccer drills. Youtube is sometimes easier to comprehend drills because you can see it being performed.

Have the kids dribble across the field, use cones for them to go around. Encourage them at this age to dribble with the inside of their foot and not their toe.

Set up two lines of kids facing each other a few yards apart and have them try to pass the ball to each other. Encourage them to use inside of foot.

Gather the cones- spread cones out across the field, kids have to gather them (while dribbling their ball), and then bring them back to you one cone at a time.

Freeze tag- players dribble while you try to tag them. If you tag them, they sit on their ball until a teammate “unfreezes” them, or have them kick the ball between the teammate’s legs to unfreeze them.

Body parts or animal sounds – these are a variation of the same game. Kids dribble and you call out an animal and they must imitate the animal. Or you call out a body part and they must touch it to the ball.

Kick the coach- kids love this one. They have to dribble and try to shoot the ball and hit you while you are running around. It forces them to pick their head up and look around while dribbling, and also to shoot while the ball is moving.

Sharks and Minnows- They dribble the ball starting at the half line and try to score while you or one of the players tries to steal their ball, if their ball gets stolen, they have to be a shark in the next round until you have no minnows left.

Gates- Another old standby. Set up gates (two cones a few feet apart) around the field and say go, and the kids try to dribble through them. Scatter the gates so there is no pattern and the kids decide where to go for themselves. Yell “stop” and ask them how many gates they have gone through. (They will usually lie in their answer, but that is half the fun!).

Hot Potato – Make a halfway line with cones. Divide the kids into two teams one on each end and put all the balls out in the middle. Have the kids try to kick the balls hard to the other side. When you say stop, the team with the least balls on their half wins.

Scrimmages, relay races, and keep away are also good for this age. Just use your imagination and have fun.