

Understanding Your Role and Your Players

Your Role is Significant!

You are one of the very brave souls who has ventured into the wonderful world of coaching. You have embarked on a journey that will most likely have you learn more than you'll ever possibly be able to teach. As a coach of 4 and 5 year olds, you are likely to be the first person of influence in your player's sports experience.

With that said, it's extremely important that you take your responsibility seriously. Your example and coaching style has the potential to release the very best in the kids you coach. Many of you can remember the positive and negative ways that different coaches impacted you when you were playing youth sports. Embrace the role models that encouraged your efforts and celebrated your attempts. Use the following material to reacquaint yourself with where 4 & 5 year olds are developmentally and adjust your expectations of their abilities accordingly.

Things you should know about your players

The following is taken directly from the Official US Youth Soccer Coaching Manual, copyright 2002, US Youth Soccer

Some general characteristics of the U6 player include:

- >Constantly in motion
- >Short attention span and easily distracted
- >Individually oriented / egocentric
- >About 3'3" tall and 30-50lbs
- >Easily bruised psychologically
- >Primitive eye-foot coordination
- >Little concern for team activities
- >Balance is limited and predominantly on dominant foot
- >No sense of pace; they will often run until they drop
- >They need to know which direction to go / They run in straight lines

Implications for training U6 players include:

- >Give brief directions, repeat when necessary.
- >Many activities of short duration
- >Lots of water breaks
- >Limit training sessions to 45-60 min.
- >Emphasize familiarity and confidence with the ball. Every child must have a ball throughout every training session.

Coaching Do's and Don'ts

Coaching Do's:

- >**Be Prepared** - Spend 5-10min. Thinking through your training session prior to the arrival of kids. Anticipate questions and/or difficulties based on behavioral knowledge of your players. Know what you're going to do and how you are going to introduce, start, and make appropriate adjustments during your training session to maximize fun and learning.
- >**Be Organized** - Have your field set up, equipment out and staged for practice to begin before players start arriving. Enlist the help of parents to help with the various tasks involved in set up or transitions between activities. If there is information to communicate, make sure it is written down so it can be handed out to parents at the end of practice.
- >**Be Positive** - Always focus on what players do right and what they attempt to do. Encouragement always works better than focusing on what isn't going well.
- >**Be Enthusiastic** - enthusiasm is contagious and can make a huge difference in a layers desire to play, practice, and continue to work on skills that don't come natural.
- >**Be Honest** - be a person that demonstrates great character and integrity. Do what you say. Keep your commitments. Admit your failures and do what's appropriate to make things right.
- >**Be Fair** - do your best to create equity among your players with the attention and encouragement you give them.
- >**Be a Leader** - do your best to show kids how to have fun in a safe environment. Demonstrate discipline and enforce team rules with equity. Interfering with other players learning should not be tolerated and is best handled by short periods of exclusion and / or parental involvement.

Coaching Don'ts:

- >**Don't Run Laps** - Laps are an old school discipline tool that discourage and defeat the morale of players that don't have a body shape that's conducive to running longer distances. The aerobic benefit of running laps for a U6 player is zero. Activities should be organized by what is developmentally appropriate, dynamic in nature, free in movement, requires elemental decision making and is fun for the player.
- >**Don't Use Lines** - if you want to encourage misbehavior with young players, put them in a line and make them wait to take a turn. Lines more often than not kill positive momentum, quality touch repetition and skill acquisition. Use interactive, dynamic activities as portrayed in your U6 Certification DVD from US Youth Soccer, the games and activities described in the Official US Youth Soccer Coaching Manual and included in the age appropriate curriculum that follows.
- >**Don't Lecture** - Keep your instructions to the team brief and to the point. Let them get started in the activity or game and make corrections along the way. Remember to use guided discovery type questions to enable players to solve problems and come up with creative solutions to the challenges that come with playing the game. Your kids are concrete, linear thinkers. Give them one or two things to take action on and look for successes to praise and great attempts to acknowledge with enthusiasm.

Elements of a Great Training Session

Training is Developmentally Appropriate - Activities and games need to be geared for not only your age group, but take into consideration the cognitive, (thinking & learning), and psychosocial, (psychological & sociological) development of your specific mix of players.

Coaches Communication is Clear, Concise & Correct - All directions need to be specific and understood by the player to be effective. Direction also needs to be brief and to the point. Keep activity going. Don't lecture. Make sure you are giving correct information using appropriate soccer terminology.

Training Activities & Games Progress from Simple to Complex - Make sure that the training session is organized and thematic, progressing from simple movement, ball handling, decision making activities to more complex exercises that help players make the connection to the actual game.

Make the Training Area Safe and the Right Size - Take precautions when setting up your training area to look for objects that cut jeopardize the safety of players, i.e., holes, sprinklers, sticks, glass, rocks, animal feces, etc. Make sure you are using appropriate sized grids and playing areas to maximize players ability to touch and control the ball and make timely decisions that simulate the game.

Training that Encourages Decision Making - Incorporate activities and games that promote appropriate game like decision making by players. Resist the temptation to over coach and direct. Let players make the decisions on the field. When you stop play to make adjustments, use guided discovery questions to encourage kids to solve their own game related problems.

Training that Always Relates to the Game - Every element of the training session should have some implication for playing the actual game. Tie everything you do back to the game!

Play - Have Fun - Find A Way To Praise Every Player

Training Time Line	Activity Name & Organization	Activity Description	Coaching Points
8-10 minutes	Warm up Set up 20 x 30 yd. grid w/double coned 3yd. goals @ both ends. Divide grid in half and move all players with a ball into the same grid.	<p>>Have players begin dribbling any way they want while staying inside the area for 30 sec. *Rest for 30 sec. by balancing ball on top of right foot. <i>(Begin adding restrictions in each successive 30 sec. interval such as: if player loses ball outside area or runs into another player they do 3-4 hillbilly push ups, I'm a star, brazilian, flying dutchman, etc., rejoin activity.)</i></p> <p>>Dribble with right foot only, inside and outside of the foot for 30 sec. *Rest for 30 sec. by balancing ball on top of left foot.</p> <p>>Dribble with left foot only, inside and outside of foot for 30 sec. *Rest for 30 sec. balance ball on top of right foot and lift to hands.</p> <p>>Dribble with right foot only by pulling or dragging the ball with bottom of foot for 30 sec. *Rest for 30 sec. balance ball on top of left foot and lift to hands.</p> <p>>Dribble with left foot only by pulling or dragging the ball with bottom of left foot for 30 sec. *Rest for 30 sec. by squeezing ball between both feet and the <i>lifting</i> ball to hands by jumping.</p> <p>>Dribble ball any way they want and stop the ball with the body part the coach calls out. (i.e., bottom of foot, knee, elbow, forehead, ear, bottom, etc.</p>	<p>Awareness of where players are</p> <p>Balance & Coordination</p>
2 minutes	Water Break	Water Break	Water Break
8-10 minutes	Individual Technical Activity Randomly space 6 @ 1 step gates inside one of the 20 x 15 grids.	<p>>Every player has a ball as they step into the grid with the gates. Each player tries to dribble cleanly through as many gates as they can in 30 sec. (If player hits a gate with the ball it doesn't count.) *Rest for 30 sec. then go again and try to break your record.</p> <p>>Do the same activity dribbling with the right foot only, push the ball through the gate with either the inside or outside of foot. *Rest for 30 sec. then go again and try to break your record.</p> <p>>Do the same activity dribbling with the left foot only, push the ball through the gate with either the inside or outside of foot. *Rest for 30 sec. then go again and try to break your record.</p> <p>>Do the same activity dribbling with the right foot only, pulling or dragging the ball through the gate. *Rest for 30 sec. then go again and try to break your record.</p> <p>>Do the same activity dribbling with the left foot only, pulling or dragging the ball through the gate.</p>	<p>Be aware of where gates are</p> <p>Keep ball under control</p> <p>Know where other players are going to avoid them</p> <p>Get eyes up and look around</p>
2 minutes	Water Break	Water Break	Water Break

Training Time Line	Activity Name & Organization	Activity Description	Coaching Points
8-10 minutes	Individual Tactical Activity Set up 6 @ 1 step gates on perimeter of one 20 x 15 grid.	<p>>Every player enters grid with a ball. Begin dribbling any way they want inside the grid. If the ball goes outside grid or players run into each other while dribbling, they need to do hillbilly push-ups, brazilians, I'm a Star, Flying Dutchmen, etc., and rejoin activity. When coach shouts, "Scramble," players dribble their ball to the nearest gate. Last player to find a empty gate does hillbilly push-ups, brazilians, etc.</p> <p>*Repeat exercise 3-4 times. Then start removing a gates one at a time until there is only one gate left.</p> <p><i>(You can do the same activity with parent volunteers as gatekeepers. Gates are closed if parent is standing in the gate.)</i></p>	<p>Know where the gates are.</p> <p>Keep ball close to feet while dribbling.</p>
2 minutes	Water Break	Water Break	Water Break
25-30 minutes	Play the Game Remove middle dividing markers on main 20X30 grid. Divide kids into equal teams. Use colored scrimmage vests for 1 team.	<p>>Let the game be the teacher. Try to make teams as even as possible. Be positive and celebrate effort and success equally. Try and find something positive to share with every player.</p> <p>>Goals are scored only when ball passes cleanly through the double coned gates on the ground.</p>	<p>Playing shape - emphasize shape rather than positions. Players are much more familiar with shapes than positions. 3 players should always try to form a triangle to offer each other maximum support. It doesn't matter which player is where at any given time as long as the playing shape is maintained.</p> <p>Use Guided Discovery Questions to solve problems -</p> <p>When you stop play to correct something, ask players what is wrong with their shape. Ask them what shape they are in. Ask them what shape they should be in. Ask them how to fix it. Resume play after players adjust their position to fix their shape.</p>

Training Time Line	Activity Name & Organization	Activity Description	Coaching Points
8-10 minutes	<p>Warm up</p> <p>Set up 20 x 30 yd. grid w/double coned 3yd. goals @ both ends.</p> <p>Divide grid in half and move all players with a ball into the same grid.</p> <p>Remember</p> <p>All activities last for are run in 30 sec. intervals.</p>	<p>>Every player with a ball and stand two arm lengths apart on one side of the grid.</p> <p>>Toe Taps - have players place one foot on top of the ball, then switch which foot is on top of the ball. Gradually p/u speed for 30 sec.</p> <p>*Rest for 30 sec. by balancing ball on top of left foot.</p> <p>>Toe taps-do the same as above but this time try not to look at the ball.</p> <p>*Rest for 30 sec. by balancing ball on top of right foot.</p> <p>>Toe Taps for 30 sec. - Try to move the ball forward with every touch.</p> <p>*Rest for 30 sec. balance ball on top of left foot and lift to hands.</p> <p>>Toe Taps for 30 sec. - Try to move the ball backwards with every touch.</p> <p>*Rest for 30 sec. balance ball on top of right foot and lift to hands.</p> <p>>Toe Taps for 30 sec. - Try to move the ball to the right with both feet.</p> <p>*Rest for 30 sec. by trying to stand on top of the ball with both feet.</p> <p>>Toe taps for 30 sec. - Try to move the ball to the left with every touch.</p> <p>*Rest for 30 sec. by trying to stand on top of the ball with both feet.</p> <p>>Toe taps for 30 sec. -move the ball forward & back at coaches direction</p> <p>*Rest for 30 sec. by trying to balance ball on forehead.</p> <p>>Toe taps for 30 sec. - move the ball to the right and left at coaches direction.</p>	<p>Balance & Coordination</p> <p>Change of Direction</p> <p>Eyes up - awareness of what is going on around them.</p>
2 minutes	Water Break	Water Break	Water Break
8-10 minutes	Individual Technical Dribbling	<p>>Every player has a ball as they step back into the grid. All players dribble with their right foot only for 30 sec. moving the ball with the inside and outside of the right foot.</p> <p>*Rest for 30 sec. by practicing a balance activity listed above.</p> <p>>Do the same activity dribbling with the left foot only for 30 sec.</p> <p>*Rest for 30 sec. by practicing a balance activity listed above.</p> <p>>Players dribble with bottom of right foot only by pulling the ball.</p> <p>*Rest for 30 sec. by practicing a balance activity listed above.</p> <p>>Players dribble with bottom of left foot only by pulling the ball.</p> <p>*Rest for 30 sec. by practicing a balance activity listed above.</p> <p>>Players dribble w/right foot only and change directions at coaches command by cutting the ball sharply w/inside or outside of foot.</p> <p>*Rest for 30 sec. by practicing a balance activity listed above.</p> <p>>Players dribble w/left foot only and change directions at coaches command by cutting the ball sharply w/inside or outside of foot.</p> <p>*Rest for 30 sec. by practicing a balance activity listed above.</p> <p>>Players dribble w/right foot only and change directions at coaches command by pulling the ball sharply w/bottom of foot.</p> <p>*Rest for 30 sec. by practicing a balance activity listed above.</p> <p>>Players repeat the same exercise with the left foot only.</p>	<p>Balance & Coordination</p> <p>Keep ball under control</p> <p>Know where other players are going to avoid them</p> <p>Get eyes up and look around</p> <p>Changing Direction</p>

2 minutes	Water Break	Water Break	Water Break
Training Time Line	Activity Name & Organization	Activity Description	Coaching Points
8-10 minutes	Tactical Dribbling Activity Shark Attack 1 scrimmage vest to be worn by shark	>Every player enters grid with a ball. Choose 1 player be the shark. Have the shark put on a scrimmage vest. Shark stands by the coach while players with the ball dribble any way they want around the grid. At coaches command, "Shark Attack," the Shark is released into the grid to try and knock every players ball out of the grid in 45 sec. When a players ball is knocked out of the grid they must retrieve their ball quickly, do 3-4 hillbilly push-ups and re-enter the grid. <i>(Everybody gets to be a shark at least once-even the coach!)</i> <i>(Keep score by counting the number of balls each shark knocks out of the grid)</i>	Movement Keep ball close to feet while dribbling. Avoiding pressure Protecting the ball from pressure Be calm, don't panic
2 minutes	Water Break	Water Break	Water Break
25-30 minutes	Play the Game Remove middle dividing markers on main 20X30 grid. Divide kids into equal teams. Use colored scrimmage vests for 1 team. Play 4 @ 6 min. quarters w/ 1 min. water breaks.	>Let the game be the teacher. Try to make teams as even as possible. Be positive and celebrate effort and success equally. Try and find something positive to share with every player. >Goals are scored only when ball passes cleanly through the double coned gates on the ground. Players help pick up equipment before they leave - remind players	Playing shape - continue to emphasize shape over position. Offensively, make a bigger triangle that utilizes the width and depth of the field. Try to protect the ball by putting body between opponent and the ball. Encourage passing. Defensively, try to keep your triangle more compact to take away a direct attack down the middle of the field. Use Guided Discovery Questions to solve problems - Let kids be the problem solvers - guide them to the appropriate answer. Resist the temptation to make corrections for the players. They need to learn how to make decisions during the game.

Training Time line	Activity Name & Organization	Activity Description	Coaching Points
8-10 minutes	<p>Warm up</p> <p>Set up 20 x 30 yd. grid w/double coned 3yd. goals @ both ends.</p> <p>Divide grid in half and move all players with a ball into the same grid.</p> <p>Remember All activities last for are run in 30 sec. intervals.</p>	<p>>Every player with a ball and stand two arm lengths apart on one side of the grid.</p> <p>>Knocking- have players stand over the ball with the ball between their feet. Begin "knocking," passing the ball back & forth between feet. *Rest for 30 sec. by balancing ball on top of left foot.</p> <p>>Knocking-do the same as above but this time try not to look at the ball. *Rest for 30 sec. by balancing ball on top of right foot.</p> <p>>Knocking- Try to move the ball forward with every touch. *Rest for 30 sec. balance ball on top of left foot and lift to hands.</p> <p>>Knocking - Try to move the ball backwards with every touch. *Rest for 30 sec. balance ball on top of right foot and lift to hands.</p> <p>>Knocking - Try to move the ball to the right with every touch. *Rest for 30 sec. by trying to stand on top of the ball with both feet.</p> <p>>Knocking - Try to move the ball to the left with every touch. *Rest for 30 sec. by trying to stand on top of the ball with both feet.</p> <p>>Knocking -move the ball forward & back at coaches direction *Rest for 30 sec. by trying to balance ball on torhead.</p> <p>>Knocking - move the ball to the right and left at coaches direction.</p>	<p>Balance & Coordination</p> <p>Change of Direction</p> <p>Eyes up - awareness of what is going on around them.</p>
2 minutes	Water Break	Water Break	Water Break
8-10 minutes	<p>Individual Technical Dribbling</p> <p>Introduction to feinting / faking and moves</p> <p>Fake Kick & Pull</p>	<p>>Every player has a ball as they step back into the grid.</p> <p>>Demonstrate move by taking a hard kick with the right foot landing on top of the ball and pull the ball back. Have players make several attempts while the ball is stationary - then have them dribble around the area and attempt the move while the ball is in motion.</p> <p>>Same progression with opposite foot.</p> <p>>Demonstrate move again by taking a hard kick with the right foot landing on top of the ball and pushing the ball to the right with right foot. Attempt the move while dribbling.</p> <p>>Same progression with opposite foot.</p> <p>>Demonstrate move again by taking a hard kick with the right foot landing on top of the ball and pulling the ball to the left with right foot. Attempt the move while dribbling.</p> <p>>Same progression with opposite foot.</p>	<p>Balance & Coordination</p> <p>Keep ball under control</p> <p>Know where other players are going to avoid them</p> <p>Get eyes up and look around</p> <p>Changing Direction</p>
2 Minutes	Water Break	2 Minute Water Break	2 Minute Water Break

Training Time Line	Activity Name & Organization	Activity Description	Coaching Points
8-10 minutes	Tactical Dribbling Activity Knock Out	<p>>Every player enters grid with a ball</p> <p>>The game is called "Knock Out." The object of the game is to dribble around the grid trying to knock other players balls out of area while keeping your ball from being knocked out.</p> <p>>Play in 30-45 sec. intervals with 30 sec. rest between intervals.</p> <p>When players get knocked out, they can re-enter the grid after doing a specified number of hillbilly push-ups, brazilians, flying dutchmen or I'm a stars. Players keep track of the number of balls they knock out in a given period to determine a winner.</p>	<p>Movement / deciding when to attack</p> <p>Keep ball close to feet while dribbling.</p> <p>Avoiding pressure</p> <p>Protecting the ball from pressure</p> <p>Be calm, don't panic</p>
2 minutes	Water Break	Water Break	Water Break
25-30 minutes	Play the Game	<p>Remove middle dividing markers on main 20x30 grid. Divide kids into equal teams. Use colored scrimmage vests for 1 team.</p> <p>Play 4 @ 6 min. quarters w/ 1 min. water breaks.</p> <p>>Let the game be the teacher. Try to make teams as even as possible. Be positive and celebrate effort and success equally. Try and find something positive to share with every player.</p> <p>>Goals are scored only when ball passes cleanly through the double coned gates on the ground.</p> <p>Players help pick up equipment before they leave - remind players</p>	<p>Playing shape - continue to emphasize shape over position. Offensively, make a bigger triangle that utilizes the width and depth of the field.</p> <p>Introduce Possession - keeping the ball away from the other team - put your body between the opponent and the ball. Encourage passing.</p> <p>Use Guided Discovery Questions to solve problems - Let kids be the problem solvers - guide them to the appropriate answer.</p>

Training Time Line	Activity Name & Organization	Activity Description	Coaching Points
8-10 minutes	Warm up Set up 20 x 30 yd. grid w/double coned 3yd. goals @ both ends. Divide grid in half and move all players with a ball into the same grid. Remember All activities last for are run in 30 sec. intervals.	>Every player with a ball on one side of the grid. >Toe Taps on stationary ball, eyes up, gradually picking up speed. *Rest for 30 sec. by moving ball forward/back & side to side with bottom of right foot. (Full extension) >Toe Taps moving ball forward & back at Coaches direction. *Rest for 30 sec. by moving ball forward/back & side to side with bottom of left foot. (Full extension) >Toe Taps moving ball right and left at Coaches direction. *Rest for 30 sec. balance on top of ball with both feet. >Knocking - knock the ball back and forth between feet - stationary *Rest for 30 sec. by trying to stand on top of the ball with both feet. >Knocking -move the ball forward & back at coaches direction *Rest for 30 sec. by trying to balance ball on forehead. >Knocking - move the ball to the right and left at coaches direction. *Rest for 30 sec. by trying to balance ball on forehead. >Dribble across grid alternating use of inside & outside of right foot. Do the same thing with left foot. *Rest for 30 sec. by balancing ball on back of neck. >Pull ball across grid with right foot, then back with left.	Balance & Coordination Change of Direction Eyes up - awareness of what is going on around them.
2 minutes	Water Break	Water Break	Water Break
8-10 minutes	Individual Technical Dribbling Introduction to feinting / faking and moves Scissors Move	>Every player has a ball as they step back into the grid. >Demonstrate move by planting left foot wide of ball on left side. Pull right foot toward left foot behind and around the ball and plant foot wide right of ball. Pull left foot toward right behind the ball and push ball to the left at a diagonal with outside of left foot. Practice with stationary ball to get technique right. >Try to do the move at Coaches direction while dribbling around grid. >Demonstrate move by planting right foot wide of ball on right side. Pull left foot toward right foot behind and around the ball and plant foot wide left of ball. Pull right foot toward left behind the ball and push ball to the right at a diagonal with outside of right foot. Practice with stationary ball to get technique right. >Try to do the move at Coaches direction while dribbling around grid.	Balance & Coordination Keep ball under control Know where other players are going to avoid them Get eyes up and look around Changing Direction / Feinting
2 Minutes	Water Break	2 Minute Water Break	2 Minute Water Break

Training Time Line	Activity Name & Organization	Activity Description	Coaching Points
8-10 minutes	Tactical Dribbling Activity	<p>>Every player enters grid with a ball.</p> <p>>Players dribble around the grid any way they want until coach calls out a move, "Scissors". Every player attempts to execute the move keeping the ball in the area and avoiding contact with other players. If contact is made or the ball goes outside the grid, have players do 3-4 toe taps and re-enter the grid. (30 sec. intervals then rest).</p> <p>>Finish training segment by playing a few rounds of "Shark Attack."</p>	<p>Movement / deciding when to attack</p> <p>Keep ball close to feet while dribbling.</p> <p>Avoiding pressure</p> <p>Protecting the ball from pressure</p> <p>Be calm, don't panic</p>
2 minutes	Water Break	Water Break	Water Break
25-30 minutes	Play the Game	<p>>Let the game be the teacher. Try to make teams as even as possible. Be positive and celebrate effort and success equally. Try and find something positive to share with every player.</p> <p>>Goals are scored only when ball passes cleanly through the double coned gates on the ground.</p>	<p>Playing shape - continue to emphasize shape over position. Offensively, make a bigger triangle that utilizes the width and depth of the field.</p> <p>Continue working on Possession - keeping the ball away from the other team - put your body between opponent and the ball. Encourage passing.</p> <p>Use Guided Discovery Questions to solve problems - Let kids be the problem solvers - guide them to the appropriate answer.</p>

Training Time Line	Activity Name & Organization	Activity Description	Coaching Points
8-10 minutes	<p>Warm up</p> <p>Set up 20 x 30 yd. grid w/double coned 3yd. goals @ both ends.</p> <p>Boss of the Balls</p>	<p>>Have kids organize themselves into groups of 3-4. Each team has a ball. Team presents ball to coach who tosses ball to far corner of the playing grid and tells group how they need to bring the ball back to him/her, i.e., "everybody with 2 hands on the ball." Group must then run to the ball and work together to bring the ball back to the coach as instructed.</p> <p>>Groups that fail to follow direction have to do 3-5 hilariously push-ups, brazilians, i'm a star, flying dutchmen, before they attempt to retrieve ball again. Other examples of commands include: "left hands only," "right hands only," "two left hands and two right hands," "A left hand, a right hand, and two elbows." Have fun with this and be creative!</p>	<p>Cooperation & Communication</p> <p>Balance & Coordination</p> <p>Change of Direction</p>
2 minutes	Water Break	Water Break	Water Break
8-10 minutes	<p>Individual Technical Dribbling</p> <p>Introduction to feinting / faking and moves</p> <p>Double Scissors Move</p>	<p>>Every player has a ball as they step back into the grid.</p> <p>>Demonstrate move by planting left foot wide of ball on left side. Pull right foot toward left foot behind and around the ball and plant foot wide right of ball. Pull left foot toward right behind and around ball and plant left foot wide of the ball on left side. Pull right foot toward left behind and to the left side of ball and push ball at a diagonal to the right.</p> <p>>Practice with a stationary ball to get the technique right.</p> <p>>Try to do the move at Coaches direction while dribbling around grid.</p> <p>>Demonstrate move by planting right foot wide of ball on right side. Pull left foot toward right foot behind and around the ball and plant foot wide left of ball. Pull right foot toward left behind and around ball and plant foot wide right on right side of ball. Pull left foot toward right behind and to the right side of ball and push ball at a diagonal to the left.</p> <p>>Practice with a stationary ball to get the right technique.</p> <p>>Try to do the move at Coaches direction while dribbling around grid.</p>	<p>Balance & Coordination</p> <p>Keep ball under control</p> <p>Know where other players are going to avoid them</p> <p>Get eyes up and look around</p> <p>Changing Direction / Feinting</p>
2 Minutes	Water Break	2 Minute Water Break	2 Minute Water Break

Training Time Line	Activity Name & Organization	Activity Description	Coaching Points
8-10 minutes	Tactical Dribbling Activity Knock Out	>Every player enters grid with a ball. >Players dribble around the grid any way they want until coach calls out a move, "Scissors," or "Double Scissors," "fake kick & pull," or "fake kick & push." Every player attempts the move while keeping the ball in the area and avoiding contact with other players. If contact is made or the ball goes outside the grid, have players do 3-4 "knocks" and re-enter the grid. (30 sec. intervals then rest). >Finish training segment by playing a few rounds of "Knock Out."	Movement / deciding when to attack Keep ball close to feet while dribbling. Avoiding pressure Keep body weight behind the ball during moves Protecting the ball from pressure Be calm, don't panic
2 minutes	Water Break	Water Break	Water Break
25-30 minutes	Play the Game Remove middle dividing markers on main 20x30 grid. Divide kids into equal teams. Use colored scrimmage vests for 1 team. Play 4 @ 6 min. quarters w/ 1 min. water breaks.	>Let the game be the teacher. Try to make teams as even as possible. Be positive and celebrate effort and success equally. Try and find something positive to share with every player. >Goals are scored only when ball passes cleanly through the double coned gates on the ground. Players help pick up equipment before they leave - remind players	Playing shape - continue to emphasize shape over position. Continue working on Possession - keeping the ball away from the other team - put your body between opponent and ball. Introduce "Smart Talking" - smart talking is another expression for intelligent communication. In order to maintain playing shape and maintain possession of the ball, it is essential for players to give directional options to their teammates. "On your left," "On your right," "Drop," "Thru," "hold," "possess," "clear," are some of the basic commands we would like kids to begin using.

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8-10 minutes	<p>Warm up</p> <p>Set up 20 x 30 yd. grid w/double coned 3yd. goals @ both ends.</p> <p>Divide grid in half and move all players with a ball into the same grid.</p> <p>Remember All activities last for are run in 30 sec. intervals.</p>	<p>>All players enter same half of grid.</p> <p>>Shoulder Tag - count the number of tags you can make in 30 sec. Play again and see if they can beat their record. *Rest for 30 sec. by balancing ball on top of left foot.</p> <p>>Begin adding one restriction at a time and a penalty for violating a restriction, such as hillbilly push-ups, etc.</p> <p>>Do 2 repetitions with each added restriction asking kids to count and beat their record each time. Add a balancing exercise into each rest period.</p> <p>>Variations on Shoulder Tag</p> <p>>Shoulder tag while trying to avoid being tagged.</p> <p>>Shoulder tag while dribbling a ball.</p> <p>You can designate a "shark" who enters the grid without a ball to try and as many people as possible in 30 sec. Tagged players do 3-4 brazilians, etc., and re-enter grid.</p>	<p>Balance & Coordination</p> <p>Change of Direction</p> <p>Eyes up - awareness of what is going on around them.</p> <p>Avoidance</p>
2 minutes	Water Break	Water Break	Water Break
8-10 minutes	<p>Individual Technical Passing</p> <p>Introduction to Push Pass & Cushioning</p>	<p>>Every player has a partner and each pair has a ball.</p> <p>>Demonstrate proper passing technique and body position.</p> <p>>Have partners stand opposite each other, 5-7 yards apart on either side of the gate. "Push Pass" the ball through the gate to partner who will receive the ball by "cushioning" and then send the ball back to their partner.</p> <p>>Add restrictions to passing once technique is more consistent. Restrictions include, hillbilly push-ups for the pair every time the ball hits a gate or goes outside the gate. Flying Dutchmen for the pair everytime a ball is passed by poking it with their toe.</p> <p>>Have partners count how many successful passes they can make in a row. Then have them try and beat their record.</p> <p>>Resting activities include trying to keep the ball pressed between foreheads, between bellies, between backs, between right feet, between left feet, etc.</p>	<p>Balance & Coordination</p> <p>Proper Body Position - head down watching foot strike ball. Heel down, toe up to strike or cushion upper middle third of ball.</p> <p>Locked Ankle</p> <p>No toe pokes</p> <p>Keep feet moving in place ready to receive and pass</p> <p>Cushioning - Player receives ball on inside of foot, heel down, toe up, with foot off the ground to absorb the momentum of the ball as it comes into their foot.</p>
2 Minutes	Water Break	2 Minute Water Break	2 Minute Water Break

Training Time Line	Activity Name & Organization	Activity Description	Coaching Points
8-10 minutes	Tactical Passing Activity Gate Passing Place 6 gates randomly around the grid Add a gatekeeper	>Every pair of players enter grid with a ball. Have pairs move freely around the grid, dribbling and passing gates as they go. After players are comfortable passing their way around the grid, have them work in 30 sec. increments to see how gates they can "cleanly" pass the ball through. After doing a short resting activity, have them try to break their record. >Begin adding restrictions: one pair through a gate at a time, must go a different gate every time, etc. >Add a gatekeeper, someone who moves around and stands in the middle of the gate while players are trying to pass. Players must move onto a different gate if a gatekeeper is in the way. Let pairs work as gatekeepers as you go through several rotations.	Coordinated Movement in Pairs Keep ball close to feet while dribbling. Asking for Pass Proper passing technique Proper weight of pass Avoiding Gatekeepers
2 minutes	Water Break	Water Break	Water Break
25-30 minutes	Play the Game Remove middle dividing markers on main 20X30 grid. Divide kids into equal teams. Use colored scrimmage vests for 1 team. Play 4 @ 6 min. quarters w/ 1 min. water breaks.	>Let the game be the teacher. Try to make teams as even as possible. Be positive and celebrate effort and success equally. Try and find something positive to share with every player. >Goals are scored only when ball passes cleanly through the double coned gates on the ground. Players help pick up equipment before they leave - remind players	Playing shape - continue to emphasize shape over position. Offensively, make a bigger triangle that utilizes the width and depth of the field. Introduce Possession - keeping the ball away from the other team - put your body between the opponent and the ball. Encourage passing. Use Guided Discovery Questions to solve problems - Let kids be the problem solvers - guide them to the appropriate answer.

Training Time Line	Activity Name & Organization	Activity Description	Coaching Points
8-10 minutes	<p>Warm up</p> <p>Set up 20 x 30 yd. grid w/double coned 3yd. goals @ both ends.</p> <p>Divide grid in half and move all players with a ball into the same grid.</p> <p>Remember All activities last for are run in 30 sec. intervals.</p>	<p>>All players enter same half of grid.</p> <p>>Body Part Dribble- every player dribbles around the grid any way they like while avoiding each other and going outside the grid. While players are dribbling, coach will call out a body part to stop the ball with. Last player to stop the ball correctly has to perform a task, hillbilly push-ups, toe taps, knocks, flying dutchmen, I'm a star, etc</p> <p>>Do several repetitions using, bottom of foot, knee, elbow, forehead, ear, nose, chin, bottom, etc.</p>	<p>Balance & Coordination</p> <p>Change of Direction</p> <p>Eyes up - awareness of what is going on around them.</p> <p>Avoidance</p>
2 minutes	Water Break	Water Break	Water Break
8-10 minutes	<p>Individual Technical Passing</p> <p>Introduction to Push Pass & Cushioning</p>	<p>>Every player has a partner and each pair has a ball.</p> <p>>Demonstrate proper passing technique and body position.</p> <p>>Have partners stand opposite each other, 5-7 yards apart on either side of the gate. "Push Pass" the ball through the gate to partner who will receive the ball by "cushioning" and then send the ball back to their partner.</p> <p>>Add restrictions to passing once technique is more consistent. Restrictions include, hillbilly push-ups for the pair every time the ball hits a gate or goes outside the gate. Flying Dutchmen for the pair everytime a ball is passed by poking it with their toe.</p> <p>>Have partners count how many successful passes they can make in a row. Then have them try and beat their record.</p> <p>>Resting activities include trying to keep the ball pressed between foreheads, between bellies, between backs, between right feet, between left feet, etc.</p>	<p>Balance & Coordination</p> <p>Proper Body Position - head down watching foot strike ball. Heel down, toe up to strike or cushion upper middle third of ball.</p> <p>Locked Ankle</p> <p>No toe pokes</p> <p>Keep feet moving in place ready to receive and pass</p> <p>Cushioning - Player receives ball on inside of foot, heel down, toe up, with foot off the ground to absorb the momentum of the ball as it comes into their foot.</p>
2 Minutes	Water Break	2 Minute Water Break	2 Minute Water Break

Activity Name & Organization	Activity Description	Coaching Points
Tactical Passing Activity Gate Passing	>Every pair of players enter grid with a ball. Have pairs move freely around the grid, dribbling and passing gates as they go. After players are comfortable passing their way around the grid, have them work in 30 sec. increments to see how gates they can "cleanly" pass the ball through. After doing a short resting activity, have them try to break their record. Add restrictions. >Add a shark, someone who moves around and puts pressure on the players who are trying to pass. (A parent volunteer) Players work in pairs to maintain possession of the ball under the pressure of the Shark. If the ball is knocked away by Shark have passing pair do toe taps, I'm a star, Brazilians, etc., and re-enter the grid.	Coordinated Movement in Pairs Keep ball close to feet while dribbling. Asking for Pass Proper passing technique Proper weight of pass Avoiding Sharks
Modified Shark Attack Remember - 30 sec. activity increments	Water Break	Water Break
Play the Game Remove middle dividing markers on main 20x30 grid. Divide kids into equal teams. Use colored scrimmage vests for 1 team. Play 4 @ 6 min. quarters w/ 1 min. water breaks.	>Let the game be the teacher. Try to make teams as even as possible. Be positive and celebrate effort and success equally. Try and find something positive to share with every player. >Goals are scored only when ball passes cleanly through the double coned gates on the ground. Players help pick up equipment before they leave - remind players	Playing shape - continue to emphasize shape over position. Offensively, make a bigger triangle that utilizes the width and depth of the field. Introduce Possession - keeping the ball away from the other team - put your body between the opponent and the ball. Encourage passing. Use Guided Discovery Questions to solve problems - Let kids be the problem solvers - guide them to the appropriate answer.

Training Time Line	Activity Name & Organization	Activity Description	Coaching Points
8-10 minutes	<p>Warm up</p> <p>Set up 20 x 30 yd. grid w/double coned 3yd. goals @ both ends.</p> <p>Boss of the Balls</p>	<p>>Have kids organize themselves into groups of 3-4. Each team has a ball. Team presents ball to coach who tosses ball to far corner of the playing grid and tells group how they need to bring the ball back to him/her, i.e., "everybody with 2 hands on the ball." Group must then run to the ball and work together to bring the ball back to the coach as instructed.</p> <p>>Groups that fail to follow direction have to do 3-5 hillbilly push-ups, brazillians, I'm a star, flying dutchmen, before they attempt to retrieve ball again. Other examples of commands include: "left hands only," "right hands only," "two left hands and two right hands," "A left hand, a right hand, and two elbows." Have fun with this and be creative!</p>	<p>Cooperation & Communication</p> <p>Balance & Coordination</p> <p>Change of Direction</p>
2 minutes	Water Break	<p>Water Break</p> <p>>Every player has a ball as they step back into the grid.</p>	Water Break
8-10 minutes	<p>Individual Technical Dribbling</p> <p>Red Light Green Light</p> <p>Use entire 20x30 grid</p> <p>Freeze Tag</p>	<p>>Red Light - Green Light / Players move across area on command of "Green Light." Coach announces, "Red Light" and players must stop. Any players caught moving or with ball far away from them must restart 10 steps back toward starting line. When all players reach end line the game is complete. Repeat.</p> <p>>Freeze Tag / 45 sec. games - Coach is "It" Players move freely around the area with the ball. When "It," the coach tags them, they have to freeze in that position. Teammates can unfreeze players by passing their ball between the frozen players legs. Repeat Game trading off who plays the "It."</p>	<p>Balance & Coordination</p> <p>Keep ball under control</p> <p>Know where other players are going to avoid them</p> <p>Get eyes up and look around</p> <p>Changing Direction / Feinting</p>
2 Minutes	Water Break	2 Minute Water Break	2 Minute Water Break

Training Time Line	Activity Name & Organization	Activity Description	Coaching Points
8-10 minutes	Tactical Dribbling Activity Knock Out	>Every player enters grid with a ball. >Players dribble around the grid any way they want until coach calls out a move, "Scissors," or "Double Scissors," "fake kick & pull," or "fake kick & push." Every player attempts the move while keeping the ball in the area and avoiding contact with other players. If contact is made or the ball goes outside the grid, have players do 3-4 "knocks" and re-enter the grid. (30 sec. intervals then rest). >Finish training segment by playing a few rounds of "Knock Out."	Movement / deciding when to attack Keep ball close to feet while dribbling. Avoiding pressure Keep body weight behind the ball during moves Protecting the ball from pressure Be calm, don't panic
2 minutes	Water Break	Water Break	Water Break
25-30 minutes	Play the Game Remove middle dividing markers on main 20x30 grid. Divide kids into equal teams. Use colored scrimmage vests for 1 team. Play 4 @ 6 min. quarters w/ 1 min. water breaks.	>Let the game be the teacher. Try to make teams as even as possible. Be positive and celebrate effort and success equally. Try and find something positive to share with every player. >Goals are scored only when ball passes cleanly through the double cone gates on the ground. Players help pick up equipment before they leave - remind players	Playing shape - continue to emphasize shape over position. Continue working on Possession - keeping the ball away from the other team - put your body between opponent and ball. Introduce "Smart Talking" - smart talking is another expression for intelligent communication. In order to maintain playing shape and maintain possession of the ball, it is essential for players to give directional options to their teammates. "On your left," "On your right," "Drop," "Thru," "hold," "possess," "clear," are some of the basic commands we would like kids to begin using.

Training Time Line	Activity Name & Organization	Activity Description	Coaching Points
8-10 minutes	Warm up Set up 20 x 30 yd. grid w/double coned 3yd. goals @ both ends.		
2 minutes	Water Break	Water Break	Water Break
8-10 minutes	Individual Technical Work		
2 Minutes	Water Break	2 Minute Water Break	2 Minute Water Break

This checklist for evaluating a training session is taken directly from the Official US Youth Soccer Training Manual and expanded upon by WSYSA Instructional Staff Coach - Mike Osborn.

Are the activities fun?

Are the activities enjoyable to perform and will it keep their interest?

Are the activities organized? Are the objectives clear? (The activities don't need to be highly structured or without rules, but the purpose and guidelines of the activity need to be understood by all).

Are the players involved in the activities? Is there maximum participation of all players, or are some more active than others?

Is creativity and decision making being used? Are players decisions to move or employ a particular skill ever changing, or are they just repeating the same movement without thinking?

Are the activities presented in a way that moves and challenges players to progress from the simplest of movements and skills to movements and skills that require more complex movement and decision making.

Are you engaging kids using the process of asking guided discovery questions?

Are you asking kids to think about and articulate how the activities they are doing relate to the actual playing of the game?

Is there a way that you or your players would like to modify this training sessions activities or games to be more meaningful and/or fun?

Introduction to Soccer Terminology

Communication / "Smart Talking":

There are a variety of terms that are used by players and coaches to communicate intelligent information to one another. We have identified 10 terms for U6 players and coaches to introduce and use appropriately in training sessions and games. The terms are not in any specific order of importance, however, they are organized by general types of communication.

General Terms:

- >*Shape* - a one word description that relates to how players should space and organize themselves on the field of play. U6 players play with 3 on a side. Their playing shape goal would be to try and stay in a triangle to maximize passing lanes and dribbling options, giving each other width and depth support offensively and more compact pressure and cover support defensively.
- >*Hold or Stay* - a one word command that tells a player to stay where they are to either balance out the attack or providing defensive cover in case possession is lost, preventing a quick counter attack.
- >*Possess* - a one word command to direct a teammate to keep the ball under control and protect it from the opponent by passing or dribbling away from pressure or by putting their body between the ball and an opponent, shielding the ball.

Offensive Terms:

- >*Carry* - Dribble the ball with speed into the space the opponent has given you.
- >*Cross* - To pass the ball across the field, typically sending the ball in front of the net or a tactical command to change the point of attack.
- >*Time* - a one word command to a teammate that tells them they have time to control the ball, get their head up and make an appropriate tactical decision with the ball at their feet.
- >*Leave* - a one word command to a teammate to not touch the ball.

Defensive Terms:

- >*Clear* - a one word command to a teammate to not take any chances with the ball and clear it out of trouble as quickly and safely as possible.
- >*Mark Up* - a command to all teammates to transition into their defensive shape and get close to an opponent, preferably goal side & ball side.
- >*Recover* - a one word command to teammates to put chase on the ball after being dispossessed, and for the rest of the team to quickly get back into good defensive shape.

Date: _____
Time: _____

Field Place & Number:
Opposing Coach: _____

Opponent:
Referee: _____

Were you prepared and organized going into the game?

Were substitutions made in an organized and timely fashion?

Was the behavior of Fans and Coaches appropriate and encouraging?

Did the game start and end on time?

Was the playing area checked for safety concerns?

Were your players fully engaged?

Did your players have fun?

Did you and your players practice good sportsmanship?

Try to write down a positive comment for each player:

What will you emphasize at this weeks training sessions to be prepared for your next match?

Game Management Organizer

Roster		Pre Game Talk	
1.)	Who are the captains?	Define which way you are going - make sure everyone understands!	
2.)			
3.)	Who is Providing Snacks & Refreshments?	Be a good sport - Be a good teammate - Try your best - Have Fun!	
4.)			
5.)			
6.)	Who is managing the kids while you are on the field?	Keep our shape - keep the ball - keep talking to each other	
7.)			
Starting 1st Quarter		Substitutions 1st Quarter	1st Quarter Adjustment
1.)		1.)	Name one thing -
2.)		2.)	
3.)		3.)	
		4.)	
Starting 2nd Quarter		Substitutions 2nd Quarter	2nd Quarter Adjustment
1.)		1.)	Name one thing -
2.)		2.)	
3.)		3.)	
		4.)	
Starting 3rd Quarter		Substitutions 3rd Quarter	3rd Quarter Adjustment
1.)		1.)	Name one thing -
2.)		2.)	
3.)		3.)	
		4.)	
Starting 4th Quarter		Substitutions 4th Quarter	4th Quarter Adjustment
1.)		1.)	Name one thing -
2.)		2.)	
3.)		3.)	
		4.)	

End of Game Checklist

Praise each player for something they did well. Thank the snack person.

Announce the time & place of next training session.