

# U5/U6 Coach Handout



## U5/U6 Player Traits

### -Physical

- Easily fatigued but with rapid recovery
- Body segments grow at different rates
- Use a movement education approach. Place an emphasis on the fundamental movement skills of: Walking, running, leaping, jumping, hopping, throwing, catching, striking, bending, stretching, twisting, pulling, pushing, reaching
- Progress in physical development starts with the head and moves downward to the feet and from the center of the body outward

### -Mental

- Short attention span/ Process small bits of information at a time/One task at a time/ Simple rules only
- Play consists of a high-degree of imagination and pretend activities - Example: The practice grid is an island or a yard
- Limited understanding of time and space relationships and boundaries
- Spread out (space relationship) is not yet comprehensible
- Dribbling out of bounds doesn't fully register as a mistake
- Can play with the ball or listen to the adults, but not both simultaneously
- Beginning to use symbols to represent objects in environment

### -Social Interaction

- May verbalize team, but do not understand group or collective play
- Egocentric - see world only from their perspective, demonstrated through parallel play. "Me", "My" and "Mine". They want the ball - their ball!
- Beginning to develop self-concept, body awareness, and self-image through movement
- Need generous praise and the opportunity to play without psychological pressure
- Influential person in their life is most likely their mother or significant parent

## Things you'll need for practice and games

- **Water:** Ask every player to bring water in a plastic water jug with their name on it.
- **Watch:** Helps you keep track of activity and practice duration.
- **One Ball Per Player:** Ask every player to bring a ball to practice, but it would also be great if you have a spare as well as a ball pump.
- **Practice kit:** Small disk cones, practice bibs (vest), whistle
- **Assistants:** You will need help, ask the other parents. They can handle setting up cones, picking up after games/practice, team communication or post game snacks.

## Practice Setup

- No more than 1 hour – ideally 45 minutes
- 5-10 Minute Warm-up with or without the ball (preferred dribbling)
- 20-30 Minute Game Activities
- 15-20 Minute 4v4 scrimmage

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## Coaching Tips:

### -Technique

- Dribbling –moving the ball, stopping the ball, rolling the ball and pulling the ball to change direction can be accomplished with games listed below.
- Shooting –putting the ball in the goal

### -Tactics

- Where is the field -boundaries
- Which goal to shoot at –direction of play
- Spread out (space relationship) is not yet comprehensible
- Limited understanding of time and space relationships and boundaries.
- Dribbling out of bounds doesn't fully register as a mistake.

### -Practice Tips

- FUN FUN FUN – games not drills / NO LINES – keep them moving
- Use movement education approach (play the games without the ball first)
- Demonstrate what you expect –“Can you do this?”
- Maximize touches on the ball –everyone has a ball, use boundaries.
- Keep it simple, keep activities short –you will notice distraction on players if activity is too long
- Plenty of water breaks
- If the games are not working, CHANGE IT during water breaks
- Passing is a foreign concept; allow them to dribble all they want.
- Play consists of a high-degree of imagination and pretend activities -Example: Games like Sharks and Minnows, the practice grid is an island, yard or castle.

## Gauging Success

1. Are they smiling?
2. Are they learning life lessons? Teamwork? Communication?
3. Are learning about soccer? Baby steps...
4. Are they trying their best? Yes she/he may have scored in the wrong goal but were they hustling?

## Parents:

- Engage your parents, most are happy to help if asked
- Have a parent meeting prior to or after first practice
  - Discuss laws of the game
  - Discuss practice and game schedule
  - Tell them what you expect about attendance and timing
  - Discuss player equipment requirements (ball, water, shinguards)
  - Talk about sideline positivity
  - Post-game snack schedule

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## Game Rules:

- Eight Minute Quarters
- Four players per team
- One coach on the field per team
- Size 3 Ball
- Sub players at any stoppage
- Unlimited substitutions
- No Goalkeepers
- NO POSITIONS
- Kickoff from middle of center circle
- Opposing team needs to start outside of center circle
- When the ball goes out of play on the sidelines, other team gets a free kick-in where it went out.
- Opposing team should give min of 3 yards during any restart of play
- Spectators should be at least 3 feet off the touchlines
- When ball goes past the end line, it is either a goal or corner kick
- If the attacking team puts the ball over the end line, then the defending team takes a goal kick
- If the defending team puts the ball over the end line, then the attacking team gets a corner kick.



## Game day Expectations:

- Some crying, they often cry when hurt and not hurt
- They will not pass the ball to each other
- Somebody will need to use the restroom
- They will need help figuring out which goal to attack
- They will score on the wrong goal, celebrate anyway
- All players will be within 3 yards of the ball
- A fire truck, plane or flower will distract their attention
- Be prepared to tie their shoe laces a lot
- No positions, allow them to play freely
- Slowly work-in scared players - let them kick-in, hold their hand etc.
- It will be hilarious and fun for you and them



## Sample Activities

### Sharks and Minnows

**Organization:** Start the game with one “Shark”, this could be the coach or a player.

**Setup:** Two lines 20-30 yards apart.

**Procedure:** Make two lines 20 yards apart and line the players along one side, they’re “Minnows”. The coach/player “Sharks” starts in the middle and the “Minnows” try to dribble to the other side. The sharks try to tag the “Minnows” as they dribble by, the players who get tag becomes sharks for the next round (Minnows dribble to other side).

**Observations:**

**Technical:** Dribbling.

**Physical:** Change in speed direction

**Tactical:** improve vision, spatial awareness.

**Social/Psychological:** High group interaction. Develops assertive play within an appropriate setting.

### Everybody’s It

**Organization:** One ball per player.

**Setup:** Random formation in a confined area.

**Procedure:** Each player dribbles within the area attempting to tag anyone while maintaining control of the ball. Each time a player tag someone, they receive a point.

**Variation:** Play game without the ball for one or two rounds first

**Observations:**

**Technical:** Dribbling, changing direction, changing speed. Using all foot surfaces (i.e. inside, outside, sole, instep), close ball control.

**Physical:** Balance, expanding peripheral vision agility.

**Tactical:** Shielding, getting away from players, looking to attack players. Quick decision-making.

**Social/Psychological:** Positive interaction within entire group. Developing an attack and defensive posture.

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## Body Part Dribbling

**Organization:** Each player with a ball

**Setup:** Random formation within a confined area.

**Procedures:** Players dribble to keep control while avoiding touching others. While they dribble, coach or leader calls out a body part, players immediately stops the ball with that body part. You can call “right elbow”, “chin”, “left knee”, etc.

**Observation:**

**Technical:** Dribbling in confine area, close control, changing direction, changing speed.

**Physical:** Reaction time, reinforce knowledge of body parts.

**Tactical:** Reading the environment, looking and moving into open spaces.

**Social/Psychological:** Working within a group, positive interaction. Listening Skills – responding to what the coach/leader is saying.

## Rat/Fox/Donkey Tails

**Organization:** Each player with a ball and a practice vest. The vest must be tucked in the waist of each player’s shorts.

**Structure:** Random formation within a confined area. Play game for a set time (i.e. 30 sec., etc.)

**Procedure:** Players tuck a training vest in the back of their shorts and dribble around in the assigned area. Each player tries to get as many tails as possible before coach says freeze/stop.

**Observation:**

**Technical:** Dribbling, changing direction and speed.

**Physical:** constantly readjusting body’s balance around a new center of gravity, agility, and strength

**Tactical:** Expands peripheral vision, introduces attacking and defending posture.

**Social/Psychological:** Fun positive competition. A positive social interaction with players in the group.

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## Musical Balls

**Organization:** Start with one ball per player

**Structure:** General area, defined space not necessary.

**Procedures:** Play like musical chairs, could use a music box, your own melodic voice or a whistle. Everyone begins dribbling his or her ball within the area. When the music stops or you blow the whistle, all players must leave their balls and run to another. During the change take one ball away. Player without a ball continues to run in the area until the next change then attempts to grab a ball. Continue this until you take 4 or 5 balls away then begin adding them back. You would not want to play until the last ball because too many players would be without a ball to dribble.

**Technical:** Dribbling.

**Physical:** Agility, quick reactions.

**Tactical:** Quick decisions to challenge for loose balls.

**Social/Psychological:** High group interaction. Develops assertive play within an appropriate setting.

## Red Light, Green Light

**Organization:** Select one player to be "IT". Each player with a ball, except for the person who is IT.

**Structure:** Two lines about 20-30 yards apart.

**Procedures:** Players with ball start at one line. The player that is IT, is at the other line. IT should start by facing away from the player/teammates and call green light. Players begin dribbling their balls towards "IT" on the other side. When "IT" calls "Red Light," players must freeze by placing their foot on top of the ball, before "IT" turns around and catches them still moving/dribbling. Anyone caught must go back to the starting line. The first player to cross the end line, becomes the new "IT" or is permitted to pick someone else who may not have been it.

**Technical:** Dribbling under close control.

**Physical:** Promotes quick reaction time and balance.

**Tactical:** Anticipation of stop signal.

**Social/Psychological:** Everyone can play and allows for the observation of different personality types. Observe to see which players are risk takers and move quickly or which players are more cautious and may move slower, but under more control.

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## Shadow Dribbling

**Organization:** Each player with a ball.

**Structure:** Confine area, random formation.

**Procedure:** Players take turns being the leader/shadow. The shadow attempts to dribble their ball to stay with the leader.

**Variation 1:** Leader without ball and Shadow with ball.

**Variation 2:** Both Leader and Shadow with balls.

### Observations:

**Technical:** Dribbling while changing direction, changing speeds, and raising the head to keep partner in view. Allows player to expand field of vision without losing sight or control of the ball. Close control of ball.

**Physical:** Balance, agility, fitness, changing direction and changing speed. Quick adjustments with ball using either foot.

**Tactical:** Increasing field of vision, avoiding other players.

**Social/Psychological:** Working with a partner. Developing field vision and sense of control with ball.

## Simon Says

**Organization:** Each player with a ball.

**Structure:** Rectangular area large enough to accommodate all players

**Procedure:** Call out commands for them to follow such as, dribble in circle, turn, stop the ball with your..., kick the ball as far away as you can.

### Observations:

**Technical:** Dribbling while changing direction, changing speeds, and raising the head to keep partner in view. Allows player to expand field of vision without losing sight or control of the ball. Close control of ball.

**Physical:** Balance, agility, fitness, changing direction and changing speed.

**Tactical:** Listening for “Simon Says”

**Social/Psychological:** Developing field vision and sense of control with ball.