

Areas of focus for U6 & U8 players

All areas of focus are progressive by nature and build on previously established skills and abilities. Review and enhancement are always needed and encouraged.

Technical Skills

U6 – ‘Me and the ball’

- Kicking
- Dribbling

U8 – ‘Partner and the ball’

- Dribbling
- Passing
- Receiving
- Shooting

Game Awareness & Strategy

U6

- Going in the correct direction when attacking and defending

U8

- Everyone defends and everyone attacks
- Moving away from your teammate when they have the ball

Essential Knowledge

U6/U8

- Basic Soccer Rules of Play
- ‘Love of the Game’
- Sportsmanship
- Fair play

'Coaching' the Player

Helpful Practice Hints

- U6 players should practice for 45/60 minutes once per week.
- U8 players should practice for 60 minutes no more than twice per week.
- Avoid lines, laps, and lectures.
- Be flexible with your activities. If it isn't working or the players aren't having fun, CHANGE IT and move to a new activity.
- Be prepared before practice. 'Not preparing is preparing to fail'. For U6/U8 players have at least 5 activities per practice.
- One topic per practice.
- ALL players should be involved in ALL activities at ALL times. No elimination games.
- Allow the players to 'learn through playing the game'; don't over coach.
- Avoid using a whistle.
- Look like a soccer coach.
- Avoid corporal punishment. Use time outs as punishment.

U6 Practice Hints:

- Practice should last between 45 minutes to 1 hour.
- Coaches must be prepared before practice with an age appropriate lesson plan with out lines or laps.
- Remember to bring extra balls for the players who might forget.
- Organize your practice as follows:
 - High Intensity Activity
 - Low Intensity Activity
 - High Intensity Activity
 - Low Intensity Activity
 - High Intensity Activity
 - 3 v 3 scrimmage
- Alternating between high intensity and low intensity activities will help manage the players' heart rate and attention space.
- Remember to focus on general movement skills.
- Leave your 'Don'ts' and 'Do it this ways' in the trunk of your car. U6 players need to be encourage to explore their new learning environment.
- Keep your explanations VERY SIMPLE and CLEAR.

U8 Practice Hints:

- Practice should be no longer than 1 hour.
- Coaches must be prepared before practice with an age appropriate lesson plan without lines or laps.
- Remember to bring extra balls for the players who might forget.
- Organize your practice as follows:
 - Warm-up (High Intensity Activity)
 - Low Intensity Activity
 - High Intensity Activity
 - Low Intensity Activity
 - High Intensity Activity
 - 4 v 4 scrimmage
- Alternating between high intensity and low intensity activities will help manage the players' heart rate and attention space.
- Remember to focus on general movement skills as well as soccer specific techniques.
- Leave your 'Don'ts' and 'Do it this ways' in the trunk of your car. U8 players need to be encouraged to experiment with all the 'new' the lessons. Specific corrections are NOT important at this age group. Focus on Dribbling.
- Asking the players to 'Try' or 'Give ...a shot', is acceptable coaching for the U8 age group.
- Keep your explanations VERY SIMPLE and CLEAR.

U10 Practice Hints:

- Practice should no longer than 1 hour and 15 minutes.
- Coaches must be prepared before practice with an age appropriate lesson plan without lines or laps.
- Remember to bring extra balls for the players who might forget.
- Organize your practice as follows:
 - Warm-up (High Intensity Activity)
 - Nucleus Activities
 - Two activities. Can be either a high and a low intensity activity or 2 high intensity activities.
 - 6 v 6 scrimmage
- U10 players will need longer water breaks to recover appropriately from high intensity activities.
- Leave your 'Don'ts' and 'Do it this ways' in the trunk of your car. U10 players need to be encouraged to experiment with all the 'new' the lessons. Specific corrections are NOT important at this age group. Focus primarily on passing.
- Asking U10 players guiding questions, 'How could you help Jessica right now?' is the preferred coaching method.
- Keep your explanations VERY SIMPLE and CLEAR.

U6 – U10 Quick Reference

Age Group	Theme	Technical Skills	Soccer Strategy	Soccer Knowledge
U6 – Introduction Phase	“The Ball and Me”	Ball Control/Dribbling Kicking	Going in the correct direction with the ball	Basic Soccer Rules Sportsmanship Fair Play Passion for the Game
U8 – Experimental Phase	“My Partner Our Ball”	Passing Dribbling Receiving Shooting Dribbling should be the primary focus.	Going in the correct direction with the ball Everyone Attacks and Defends Moving away from teammates when they have the ball Moving ball away from mass of players	Basic Soccer Rules Sportsmanship Fair Play Passion for the Game
U10 – Foundation Phase	“A Small Group and their Ball”	<u>Enhance knowledge of basic skills:</u> Passing Dribbling Receiving Shooting <u>Introduce:</u> Outside foot passing Heading General Goal keeping tech. Tackling Receiving & turning Dribble fakes and feints Longer passing Dribbling and passing should be the primary topics.	<u>Enhance:</u> Everyone Attacks and Defends Moving away from teammates when they have the ball – Length & Width Moving ball away from mass of players <u>Introduce:</u> Decision to dribble or pass Concept of time and space Concept of supporting their teammate Positions Patience when defending – Delay Combination Play Depth	<u>Enhance:</u> Basic Soccer Rules Sportsmanship Fair Play Passion for the Game <u>Introduce:</u> Okay to make a mistake Perseverance Teamwork Concentration

Table Provided by: Peter McGahey