

Littleton Soccer Club Founded 1960

**LITTLETON**  
SOCCER

**HRSA**



## Rec Coach Manual, U5 – U6

### Principles of Youth Coaching

- Developmentally Appropriate
- Clear, Concise, Correct Information (Brevity, Clarity, Relevance)
- Simple to Complex
- Safe and Appropriate Training Area
- Decision Making
- Implications for the Game
- Guided Discovery

## Characteristics of U5 - U6 Players:

- Egocentric orientated: me, my, mine
- Short attention span
- Psychologically easily bruised
- Little or no concern for team activities
- Physical and psychological development of boys and girls quite similar
- Physical coordination (motor skills) immature
- Love to run, jump, roll and climb
- Eye hand and/or eye foot most primitive at best
- Can balance on good foot
- Catching skills not developed
- No sense of pace- go flat out in activities, fatigue easily but recover quickly
- Preoperational stage of development, Psychomotor, Cognitive and Psychosocial
- Process small pieces of information at a time
- Immature understanding of time and space relationships
- Rules must be simple
- Need generous praise, play without pressure
- Tend to only one task at a time in problem solving situations

## An Approach to the Game for U5 - U6 Players – Developmentally Appropriate

What makes a U6 child want to play soccer? We assume they want to be great soccer players but generally they are playing at this age because it is a great sport to develop social skills through interaction and cooperation, their minds because it requires them to think and make decisions. Importantly it helps with coordination, balance, agility, key motor skills. And also the parents tell them they are playing...

The term “developmentally appropriate” suggests that activities through soccer need to meet the demands of the players. The activities need to be appropriate for their age by meeting the needs of their characteristics, which in turn will allow for development, learning and understanding.

## Components for a U5 - U6 Practice Session:

- Soccer has to be fun
- Keep things simple
- Prepare before practice
- Information should be minimal, no more than 60 seconds of lecturing/talking
- Let them play
- Use “Guided Discovery” questioning for learning and education, what, why and how
- Step back, allow the players to make decisions and problem solve
- Praise players continually when they are improving or have something good, i.e. “well done Billy”, “I like the way you pass with the inside of the foot, Jessica”
- Practices should not exceed 60 minutes
- All players should have a ball each
- Maximize touches on the ball, the more the better
- Create a ball hog at this age group!
- Movement education is the basis for activities, i.e. changing direction, agility and coordination
- All players should be involved, i.e. maze games which includes everybody and generally multi directional and dynamic in nature
- Coaching individuals and not teams
- Put them in an environment that they can be successful
- Always finish with a scrimmage
- Always be positive
- Never single a player out for punishment, they are easily bruised at this age group
- Dynamic activities – these are activities that include everyone
- Relaxation activities – these allow the players to relax, calm down. Good to mix in between Dynamic and Dynamic Competitive activities. Also use as a cool down.
- Dynamic Competitive – the incorporation of an opponent (pressure) in the activity
- The session should flow from one activity to the next; use water breaks for changing area size if needed.

## Coaching Philosophy:

- Safety First
- You are an important role model
- Be prepared and punctual
- No lines, No laps
- No excessive lectures
- Develop their relationship with their ball
- Never leave a child at the field alone
- Remember they are young children NOT adults, you need to get down to their level. Make it exciting, fun, engage the players without acting like a clown
- The shape of the team is a “Triangle”

*“You forget what you hear, you remember what you see, you know what you do”*

## Typical U5 – U6 Training Session:

- Should not exceed 1 hour
- Warm Up: Soccer movement (changing direction, jumping, hopping etc) Individual ball manipulation
- Dribbling, Passing and Shooting (ball striking) activities
- Small sided scrimmage, 1v1, 2v2, 2v1 etc.
- Cool down/review of session

## Guided Discovery Questioning

This method of learning allows the players to think for themselves, make decisions, and problem solve. We want the players to be creative in applying skills and techniques learnt from a soccer standpoint. We also want them to understand the game better by allowing them to answer questions, problem solve, without us as coaches/adults giving them all the answers. The general rule of thumb is that you would ask 1 to 2 guided discovery questions per activity.

Examples of these are as follows:

- 1) Billy I liked the way you passed the ball, what part of the foot did you use?" the reply is "the inside" good I like that, do you think you could all pass with the inside of the foot, like Billy?
- 2) "Jessica- great shot with your laces" why did Jessica use her laces to shoot? Answers your are looking for:
  - More power than the inside of the foot
  - It can be quicker than using the inside of the foot

Good use of Guided Discovery Questioning takes time and practice. Try it at home with your children, if you practice this method you will not only become a better coach quicker, you will empower the children you have to become better soccer players through thoughts and actions.

**"GOOD LUCK AND HAVE FUN"**